

it is the one bond of union between the scattered provinces of the Dominion, and to throw it down would be a perilous experiment. It is the price paid for Canadian nationality, and it would be useless to haggle over it.

That annexation would improve matters seems very doubtful. There are two theories of government. One is that the Government should do *as little as possible*, leaving the people to manage their own affairs; the other is that the Government should do *as much as possible*—interfering, regulating and oiling every joint of the machinery day by day. This latter is the system which has always been in vogue in Canada from the time of the French *régime* downwards; whereas the former system was adopted in the States, where the New England settlers managed their own affairs from the first. It is, indeed, remarkable to find that immigrants from Vermont, who settled in Canada and who wished to bring with them their own local institutions, finally gave way and fell in with the paternal system.* Tradition counts for much in these matters, and Canadians would not willingly depart from their traditions; nor should it be forgotten that our provincial governments are merely weak copies of the central government,† and no one who has watched their

*On this point Bourinot's "Local Government in Canada" is most instructive.

†The following report (taken from the *Star* of August 24th, 1888,) of a speech made by Mr. Mercier, wherein he describes the use to be made of the surplus arising from the forced conversion of the provincial debt is instructive as an illustration of the system pursued by the provincial government of the Province of Quebec:—"Mr. Mercier, on Wednesday evening, took as his subjects the principal political topics now agitating the people of this province, including the debt conversion scheme, which he declared his intention of carrying through, and dividing the saving in interest to the province each year (some \$250,000), one-third in education and two-thirds amongst the farmers in colonization, making roads, etc.; in grants to agricultural associations, in educating the farmers in better methods of farming, and in making improved butter!" It may seem incredible that a provincial premier should deliberately wreck the credit of his province in the money markets of the world, in order that farmers might learn to make butter; but it is in reality no more than a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Ottawa system, and it is interesting as showing the monstrous lengths to which that system may be carried when the powers conferred by our constitution fall into the hands of incompetent and not over-scrupulous men.