

of difficulties for those which we have. That the working out of the details would present a good deal of difficulty is, of course, true; but the difficulties incidental to the starting and working out of a sound system are always possible of adjustment, while the difficulties which arise, as do those from which we suffer, out of the clashing of incompatible systems, are hopelessly chronic; and if the position here taken—that the provinces which form the Dominion suffer under the Constitution as it is—is correct, it follows that amendment of the Constitution is a prerequisite to the full prosperity of the Dominion.

Reverting now to the case used in illustration: The statements already quoted show a balance in favour of the Province, July 1, 1901, of thirteen and a half millions of dollars. To-day, the balance will be fully fifteen millions.* At present British Columbia, although saved from stagnation, even forced ahead a little, by its enormous natural wealth, is practically marking time; checked, fettered, hampered, by sheer inability to undertake those public works which, in a country of rugged physical features and "magnificent distances," are essential to the development of its resources. It has a net debt of eight or nine millions, and a revenue (provincial) barely sufficient for current expenses of administration. Suppose its credit balance paid over to it and an arrangement entered into that the Dominion should in future retain, of the revenue it received from British Columbia, only what was required for expenditures on account of the Province, plus a contribution of, say, half a million annually towards central government and legislation—what would be the difference in the position and prospects of the Province? It could pay off its whole indebtedness, devote a surplus of some six millions to public works, and have for ordinary ex-

penditure a revenue about seventy-five per cent. larger than that which it now commands. Such conditions would mean prosperity without precedent—progress by leaps and bounds.

It may be said that British Columbia entered the Confederation under certain Terms of Union, and that its position is the result simply of the working out of those Terms; that the Constitution does not come into the question. But the Terms were framed under, were an outgrowth of, the Constitution; and the Constitution is condemned by the fact that such a condition has arisen under it.

It is foreign to the purpose of this article to dwell upon British Columbia's claim for "better terms"; the object is rather to point out that these recurring claims for better terms are but symptoms of a disease the root of which is in the Constitution itself. That Constitution, being an act of parliament and not a growth of tradition and precedent, can be amended, even radically, without serious disturbance of the body politic. That it should be amended seems to be proved by the facts set forth in this article, taken in conjunction with previous parallel cases. No statesman should rest satisfied with a written Constitution, the history of which has been a history of continual friction, punctuated by a recurring necessity for empirical readjustments of the relations between the whole commonwealth and its component parts.

Under the Constitution as it should be—as, according to the law lords, it is in theory—many things which now cause friction, jealousy, waste, circumlocution, would be done away with; government would be simplified and its direct cost reduced; the provinces, nerved by a larger independence, steadied by a greater responsibility, would develop a higher and healthier type of public life; the central government, relieved of much petty detail and enjoying a larger immunity from the evils of corruption and incompetence, would be set free to give deeper attention to those questions of higher

*The tables already cited (pp. 568A, 568B, B.C. Sess. Papers, 1901), show that the Dominion now receives from the Province yearly about \$2,000,000 more than it expends on account of the Province.—J.C.B.