

## THE BUDGET AND TARIFF.

Even Sir Charles Tupper's political opponents freely admit that his decisive and positive character is the mainspring of his power and influence in the country. No one who has carefully perused his budget speech could fail to be impressed with its conciseness and clearness. Indeed, in these respects it was a model speech, and, although many may question the arguments adduced by the Finance Minister in support of some of the proposed changes in the tariff, there can be no doubt that Sir Charles is fully convinced in his own mind as to the advisability and necessity that exist for making these changes. Of course, the protection afforded to the iron industry is by far the most important of these changes, and only those conversant with the business can say whether or not the measure of protection afforded by the government will tend to foster the extensive manufacture of iron in the Dominion. If protection protects, and it certainly does in other industries, there is no reason why the same should not hold good in the case of the iron industry—the raw material for which is to be found in large deposits in our own country. The suddenness of the change in the tariff is, to our minds, one of the chief objections that can be raised against it. It is manifestly unfair for persons having large contracts on hand, based on the old values, to be obliged to carry these out at a loss in consequence of tariff changes, and if the government can see its way clear to remit the duties in such cases it should certainly do so. For some time to come the iron and hardware trade will remain unsettled, but after they have once adapted themselves to the new order of things no great inconvenience will be experienced, excepting by those who will be obliged to pay the increased tariff, which must hold until competition among iron manufacturers brings them down to their normal condition. Dry goods men will be interested in the new specific duty which has been placed upon cotton and linen shirts, collars and cuffs. Hitherto the American manufacturers have competed keenly with those engaged in the same business in this country, and it is this competition which has led to the placing of a dual duty—first, an ad valorem duty, and second, a specific duty upon each article. The increased duties upon cigars and cigarettes will, it is believed, lead to a diminution in the importation of these luxuries, and to their increased manufacture by our own people. Upon fishery matters Sir Charles has spoken with no uncertain tone. Moderately, but firmly, he adheres to the view of this question which Canada has taken, and while he acknowledges that the retaliatory measure, if put in force by the President of the United States, would be a serious matter, he is far from believing that we are likely to experience this "bolt from the blue." The Finance Minister has faith in the country, faith in its resources, and faith in our future; and, standing on this vantage ground, he announces a positive and progressive policy, which, in his opinion, will result in great material advantage to the Dominion.

## THE FRENCH AND MADAGASCAR.

The French campaign in Madagascar has naturally excited much attention amongst English people, whose sympathies were strongly with the natives, especially the Hova tribe, whom they were largely instrumental in Christianizing and civilizing. Information has only been obtainable from French sources, and this has led to the erroneous opinion that, although the French had not been over successful in their encounters with the native troops, still they had frightened the Queen and people into accepting a French protectorate.

General Willoughby, the American officer who, in the middle of the war, took command of the Malagasy troops, and who finally became ambassador of the Queen and negotiated and signed the treaty with the French, has contributed an extremely interesting article to the *Fortnightly Review*, in which he declares that the treaty does not give the French a protectorate over Madagascar, that by the war "she has lost nothing that she greatly values, and she has preserved her independence." General Willoughby describes the people of the many Malagasy tribes as naturally robust and as hardened to fatigue and endurance from their youth up. They number over five and a-half millions, and the Hovas, who are the sovereign tribe, and occupy the central province, number less than a million, while the Sakalavas, inhabiting the whole western side of the island, number over one million three hundred thousand. The Beteiles and the Betsimisarakas tribes, who inhabit the east coast, are numerically very strong, their population being over three millions. All the different tribes speak but one language, and are subject to the Hovas, who are Malays, and though physically inferior, being below middle stature, have considerable mental powers and are comparatively advanced in civilization. Lighter of complexion than Spaniards, Italians or Turks, they have, as a rule, "soft, straight hair, hazel eyes, a well-proportioned and erect carriage, and are distinguished by great courage and activity." Their dialect is a written one, and they have preserved their traditions, songs and proverbs. They differ from the other tribes, who are much more powerful physically, being on an average six feet in height, but having broad, low foreheads, flattish noses, thick lips, and wavy hair, and being mentally greatly inferior to the Hovas. The Sakalavas, who were the allies of the French, are described as being nomadic in their habits, as sly, perfidious, brutal and arrogant, and as living on plunder, so that a European is never safe a moment among them if at their mercy. Since the foundation of the present dynasty, fifty-six years ago, by Radama I., "the national history of the Malagasy literally bristles, excepting during the reign of Ranavalona II., with reforms and improvements." Ranavalona II. was a Christian when she came to the throne, and she began her reign by ordering her ancestral idols to be burned—an example which, owing to the work of the missionaries, was immediately followed by most of her people. At the close of her reign the schools numbered more than eleven hundred, and

the gospel was preached in twelve hundred churches. She inaugurated great governmental reforms, established eight departments, presided over by secretaries of state, home, foreign, war, justice, law, commerce, agriculture, finance and education, with a staff of clerks for each. Courts were established, the army organized, a rural police provided, a regular system of taxation inaugurated, and slavery abolished.

The monarchy is limited by means of a strange provision of the law which requires that the queen shall marry her prime minister, thus bringing about a union of the classes of the noblemen, represented by the queen, and the people, represented by the prime minister. The present prime minister, who has held the office during the lives of the last two queens, is described as an enlightened reformer, and is known amongst Europeans by the honorable sobriquet of "Deal Fair." He makes a kind and wise husband to Her Majesty Queen Ranavalona III, the niece of the late queen, who is 24 years of age, and was educated at the London Missionary Society's School for Girls. She is described as being a model ruler and possessed of many accomplishments. In public she wears European costumes, and her palaces are furnished in European style. The French cut but a sorry figure in their attack on Madagascar. On the flimsy excuse that a portion of the island had been sold to them by the rebellious Sakalavas they made war with the queen, and, after an inglorious campaign, closing with a couple of repulses, consented to a treaty. Under the fifth article of this treaty the French consent to the sweeping away of all the claims founded upon the "historic rights" of 1841 and 1842, and to the recognition of Ranavalona III. as sovereign of the whole island. The first and second articles stipulate that the foreign relations of Madagascar shall be placed under the protection of the government of France, but before the queen would sign the treaty with those articles she required an explanatory clause making it clear that Madagascar should have the right to negotiate her own commercial treaties with foreign nations, free from the interference of the French government. Madagascar consented to pay four hundred thousand pounds to France, but for this France undertook all the liabilities of the war, amounting to eight hundred thousand pounds. The French have evacuated Tamatave, and now only occupy one part with a garrison so weak and so ill-supported by war ships that General Willoughby says they are practically prisoners of the Malagasy, and, as such, hostages for the observance of the treaty. In conclusion he says: "I am well assured from my experience of the Malagasy disposition that France will never acquire a protectorate over Madagascar." From all of which it would appear that France has subdued the Hovas in about the same manner that Artemus Ward won his fight, by inserting his nose between the teeth of his opponent.

## WE SHOULD MEND OUR WAYS.

The wretched condition of the roads throughout the Province during the greater part of the year, is a matter which deserves greater consideration than has yet been bestowed on it, and it is time that our municipal councillors set themselves the task of discovering how this state of things is to be obviated. In Quebec and Ontario magnificent macadamized highways are maintained in a thorough state of repair by the tolls which are levied upon the drivers of all vehicles who may have occasion to use them. Within a few miles of Toronto there is a fine road, nine miles in length, with farms located on either side. This road is macadamized according to the most improved methods, and is graded throughout. At either end is a toll-gate, in order to pass through which a tax of twenty cents must be paid the keeper on entering, the exit being free. The tolls collected keep the road in first-class order during the entire season, and farmers using it find that the wear and tear of harness and waggons is small compared with what it was before the municipality adopted the toll-gate system for keeping up the road. We mention this in order to show that even in the premier Province it is found a difficult matter to keep the public highways in a proper condition; but these difficulties, formidable as they may be, should not deter our councillors from grappling with a question of so much importance. We believe that the system of statute labor, in vogue in Nova Scotia, is mainly responsible for the disgraceful condition in which the major portion of our roads remain throughout the year. It may be a hardship on some to force them to give a cash equivalent for the labor which the law stipulates they shall perform, but it is a greater hardship to force the community to forego a cash payment for labor which, in too many instances, is practically wasted. Road making is a business which few men understand; and even the labor which is required cannot be performed by every man, however muscular he may be.

The farmer who understands ploughing and the best methods of putting in a crop, the blacksmith who can forge a neat horseshoe, and the carpenter who can use his chisel, saw and plane to advantage, all require muscle, but, in addition to this, they must needs have experience, ability, and a trained eye; but the ability to plough a field, to forge a horseshoe, or to use a plane, is of no practical benefit in road-making, and hence it is that the larger portion of the statute labor performed is barren of results. Year after year our roads are patched up with road metal dug from the gutters on either side, which is about the worst material which can be used, being miry during wet, and dusty during dry weather. We believe that the time is come for a reform both in the expenditure of road moneys and in the employment of labor upon them, and the first step in this reform should be the abolition of statute labor, and the collecting of an equitable tax.

A Baltimore clergyman says that a fashionable lady of that city boasted that during a trip across the ocean she won money enough at cards to pay her passage.