

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE sudden death of Mr. H. E. Clarke, M.P.P., on the floor of the Ontario House of Assembly, and while in the act of delivering a speech, was one of those sad and startling events which at intervals send a shock through a community. The deceased member was, as is well known, next to Mr. Meredith, the most prominent man on the Opposition side of the House. What is of vastly greater moment, in view of the tragic event, is that he was, political opponents as well as friends being witnesses, a man of stainless reputation and of the highest integrity. Though an ardent party man and endowed with more than usual fluency as a debater, his speeches seldom or never gave his political opponents anything to complain of on the score of lack of fairness or courtesy. Mr. Clarke, though largely self-educated, was a well-informed and able man, influential alike in public and in private life. He was, moreover, of a kindly and genial disposition. Though his death was sudden, it can scarcely, we believe, be said to have been unexpected. He had been in failing health for some time, and was troubled with weakness or irregularity of heart action, insomuch that he is said to have found it necessary to guard carefully against undue exertion or excitement. It is pleasing to learn that to nothing of this kind can his sudden death on Friday last be attributed, as matters had been proceeding very smoothly in the House up to the moment of his decease. The interment took place on Monday, when an unusually large concourse of people were present to show the high respect in which the deceased was held by his fellow-citizens.

REVENUE last year, \$38,579,310; expenditure last year, \$36,343,562; surplus, \$2,235,748. Estimated revenue for current year, \$36,655,000; estimated expenditure for current year, \$36,650,000; surplus, \$5,000. Exports for last year, \$68,417,296; an increase over those of the preceding year of about \$1,600,000, and over those of 1889 of nearly \$10,000,000. The imports of last year were somewhat less than those of 1889, so that the aggregate trade was about the same as that of the preceding year, while it was greater by about \$14,000,

000 than that of 1889. In these figures we have a condensed summary of the financial facts given in the annual statement of the Minister of Finance on Tuesday week. It is not our intention to attempt either analysis or review of the financial part of this important speech. Those who are interested in such matters, as all who have regard for or stake in the country should be, will have had the *pros* and *cons* presented in the various speeches of the debate, and will have already drawn their own conclusions. The speech was beyond question able, clear and comprehensive, notwithstanding its comparative brevity. We should, however, add to the total of expenditure for last year (1891) the sum of \$4,381,554 paid out for railways, canals, railway subsidies, public works, etc., and charged to Capital account. Setting this sum over against the surplus our readers will be curious to know by what happy feat of financial legerdemain Mr. Foster was able to close the year with an addition of only \$275,817 to the net debt of the Dominion. When he turns his eyes toward the future the Minister's forecast cannot be said to be sanguine, though it is hopeful so far as Canada's prospects of being able to make ends meet is concerned. He does not anticipate a surplus. His estimate of income for 1892-93 is \$36,500,000, and he is of opinion that our annual expenditures will henceforth average about that sum. But he surely cannot contemplate with equanimity the prospect of a stationary condition for this young country which ought to be adding hundreds of thousands to its population and millions to its trade aggregate every year. Nor can we safely shut our eyes to the fact that the past year and the present up to date have been exceptionally favourable to Canada by reason of the coincidence of the grand crops of last season here, with a time of great scarcity in Europe.

BEYOND all comparison the most interesting part of the Finance Minister's Budget Speech was the part which did not necessarily belong to it. When he turned aside for a few moments to supply the missing link in the Report of the Washington Convention, he had, we may be sure, the attention of every member present and of the galleries as well. And this was certainly a very curious bit of narrative. It was not a little strange, and not wholly soothing to Canadian pride to have the Canadian Minister of Customs repeat the series of statements in which he and his colleagues laid before the Secretary of State of the United States the difficulties which beset them in discussing any proposal looking to an international trade arrangement. Whether it was by way of asking for suggestions to help them out of their perplexity, or by way of apology for their inability to make anything like an acceptable offer of reciprocity, after having sought an interview for that purpose, we need not stay to enquire. Nor does it matter, save from a party point of view, whether Mr. Foster and his colleagues are sorry, as they are bound to profess to be, or glad, as their opponents say they are, that the matter is closed in its present shape, so far as their efforts to secure the reciprocity which was the ostensible object of the National Policy, and which has been the subject of so much abortive diplomacy, are concerned. The one salient and momentous fact now before us as the people to whom the destinies of the northern half of the North American continent are committed is that, as the Minister of Finance has told us, the question of unrestricted trade with the other half of the continent is settled, and settled on the basis of a very high and in many respects almost prohibitory tariff against us. And this settlement is so far permanent that the Government which represents the policy which has led to or ended in this result has just been supported at the polls in a manner which has given it an overwhelming majority in the Commons and so every prospect of retaining power and directing the Dominion's policy for many years to come. It is impossible not to honour the sentiment which has led the Government to refuse even to consider an arrangement, were such an one possible without sacrifice of either Canadian autonomy or self-respect, which would involve discrimination against Great Britain, whether one agrees fully with the conclusion which is the outcome of that sentiment or not. On one point, indeed, we should have been glad to have some light. Have the Dominion Min-

isters ever seriously discussed this question of discrimination with the statesmen of the Mother Land? Has Mr. Foster, for instance, ever laid the difficulties of the Canadian position before Lord Salisbury, or Lord Knutsford—not to say Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Morley, who stand so excellent a chance of occupying seats on the Government benches at Westminster, within a year—with the same refreshing frankness he displayed towards Mr. Blaine, and asked any of these statesmen what way of escape they would suggest? It is not sufficient to say that there can be no doubt upon that point, because, as we all know, British statesmen have not only submitted to discrimination against Great Britain on a former occasion, but were the active agents in securing for Canada the treaty which involved it. Nor can we doubt that their course on that occasion was a wise one, not only in the interests of Canada, but in those of Great Britain and the Empire. Indeed, if the Dominion is to-day any source of strength or pride to the Mother Country, the fact is due to no small extent to the progress made by the former during the period of prosperity she enjoyed under the operation of that very treaty which thus discriminated. Is it not quite possible that some of those far-sighted statesmen would, in like manner, now foresee that a policy even of discrimination, distasteful though it be, under which Canadian growth and progress would be assured and rapid, might redound to England's profit more than the one more seemingly loyal, which continues to retard the prosperity which should, by every law of natural increase, be ours? We should really much like to know what a far-seeing British statesman would have to say about the Canadian situation, if fairly put before him.

BUT all this is now of the past. True, the Opposition are said to have determined to persevere, and to continue the fight for unrestricted reciprocity, believing that with more earnest and sanguine commissioners, a more favourable answer could be obtained at Washington. But their hope must look at best to a somewhat dim and distant future. In the meantime what have the Government to propose as an alternative for the abandoned hope? The only answer as yet vouchsafed to this most natural and vital question is that contained in the somewhat enigmatical words which constituted the peroration of Mr. Foster's speech, in which, after depicting in glowing colours the advantages and unlimited capacities of the British market, he hinted broadly that the time may be near when "it will become the duty of this Government to propose to the House that we should hold out a helping hand to the hand which helps us, to repay favour with favour, interest with interest, and to give the best treatment in our markets to those countries which accord us the best treatment in their markets." This must mean evidently one of two things. Taken in its literal and natural sense it would seem, indeed, to mean simply the one thing, viz., that as Great Britain gives us the freest possible access to her markets, while the United States and all other countries erect against us more or less formidable trade barriers, we should in return admit the products of Great Britain either absolutely free, or at much lower rates of duty than those put upon the products of other countries. This would be an intelligible policy, a logical policy, a truly loyal policy. Under such a policy the trade between this country and the Mother Land would indeed go forward by leaps and bounds. To show how broadly it would contrast with the policy now in vogue, let us quote, simply as an illustration, two or three sentences from a letter recently published in the *North British Daily Mail* by "An Old Trader," who says that as a resident of Glasgow he has been engaged all his business life in the Canadian trade. He says:—

It is notorious that the magnificent and expensive fleet of steamers which traffic with this Dominion must have heavy weight to render them thoroughly seaworthy for the voyage, frequently stormy. Would you, sir, believe it that the sapient Government in power here imposes duties of £2 19s. 10d. sterling per ton of 2,240 lbs. on British bar iron, and £2 15s. 3d. on same weight of cast-iron pipes? These figures mean 53 per cent. on bars and fully 60 per cent. on cast pipes, on current value, therefore nearly prohibitory.

There are evidently possibilities of an immense expan-