



THE Steel-Coal lawsuit at Sydney, C.B., must put ordinary men in better conceit with themselves; for it shows that even the financial giants are foolish enough to quarrel over what looks very much like a matter of personal pique, and thereby permit the lawyers to enrich themselves at their expense. Ordinary people will do this sort of thing, but then they are only ordinary people. The Napoleons of Finance are supposed to be too shrewd to get caught in any such net. They are wise enough to realise that there is nothing to be gained by "lawing it," and to get together in some sort of a compromise. That is, they usually are; but in this case they have allowed themselves the luxury of a long quarrel and a law suit. Well, they can afford it better than most of us. It is not at all likely that even "Jimmie" Ross will have to go without jam for breakfast because of his extravagance. But there is one thing certain, and that is if the coal and steel people are going to waste their substance in riotous proceedings of this sort, the plain people will begin to consider whether they had not better save their money and give it neither as bonuses nor in the form of tariff protection to national industries which behave like farmers with a life-long feud over a line fence.

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New Brunswick has seen a big newspaper change within the last week or so. The Russel papers have been sold to Mr. John McKane of Newcastle, and have come out with a new and vigorous brand of independence. These papers—the Morning Telegraph and the Evening Times—were originally Liberal. They were regarded as more or less "regular" Liberal, while Senator Ellis' Globe voiced his personal version of Liberalism. The St. John Sun was then the Conservative organ, with the able and caustic Mr. S. D. Scott as editor. But New Brunswick politics is a succession of surprises. "Dave" Russell bought the Telegraph; and a Nova Scotia Liberal bought the Sun. Russell was enthusiastically for Blair, both in and out of office; and the "conversion" of the Sun left the Conservatives without a newspaper in New Brunswick's big city. Now Mr. McKane—who is a Conservative and a millionaire many times over—has the Telegraph, and the party is thought to be better equipped journalistically than it was before the beginning of the game of "cross tag."

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One of the real weaknesses of the party system—upon which Mr. Goldwin Smith has not to my knowledge dwelt—is the difficulty of maintaining an effective press for a party long out of office. The Liberals found it so during their eighteen years of wandering in the wilderness. The Toronto Globe was, of course, strong enough to be independent of party futures; but the Montreal Herald was a feeble publication, the Ottawa Free Press was still feebler, and there was no French Liberal paper which reached the people. To-day the Conservative party is feeling the same weakness; and it would feel it far more if it were not for the financially independent journals which were established during the years of fatness. New Brunswick without a metropolitan Conservative paper was a practical surrender to "the enemy." The only two French papers which have a popular circulation are nominally—at least—Liberal. The

Montreal Gazette and the Toronto Mail and Empire are impregnable fortresses; but the decade of Liberal rule has changed the relative positions of the party papers at many a point.

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The only truly independent paper is the commercial success. We hear a lot of ignorant and hypocritical talk about the "degradation of journalism" through "catering to the mob," and the dependence of the editorial desk upon the counting-room. "Catering to the mob" is simply seeking the approval of the people—endeavouring to print the sort of paper that the people want to buy. The sneer is directed not only at the editor who "caters" but at the people—at their taste, their intelligence and their sense of the fit and the worthy. It is the sneer of a snob. It is a denial of all that broad and generous philosophy which is founded upon faith in the people, which dares to make democracy the basis of government, and which has long ago exposed the impious lie that a self-selected few are better able to think for the people than they are to think for themselves. The people know what they want to read; and the paper which supplies it gets the largest circulation and consequently is the surest commercial success.

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As for the dependence of the editorial desk upon the counting-room, it is precisely the paper that has a popular hold upon the people which can afford to ignore the presence of private interests sought to be exercised through the counting-room. Where a hundred thousand people exert their power on the counting-room, the clamour of one can hardly be heard; but where a paper "caters" to the tastes of a few, it must be exceedingly careful not to offend any of the few. But what the superior folk, who find such comfort in flinging these flunky phrases at successful papers, never stop to consider, is the fact that every paper must get money if it is to continue to publish. Now if a paper does not get its money from the people, where does it get it? Be very sure it gets it. Otherwise it could not pay its paper-maker, or its type operators, its staff, its news service or its agents. But if the source is not popular confidence, what is it? Is it political "graft"? Is it the pap-feeding of wealthy interests who expect properly coloured editorial in return? And which is best for the nation—a paper which must win the approval of the people to live, or a paper which can defy or betray the people at the bidding of a selfish interest which makes up its deficits?



A Spoilt Pet.

Le Petit Belge.—"Please, Sir, Your Monkey's Taken my Bag!"
Uncle Sam.—"That's So! Ain't He Cute?"

[On the subject of Belgium's unpaid claim upon Venezuela for £400,000, The Times says: "A moral responsibility lies with the United States for the behaviour of the State towards which she has shown a special solicitude."]

—Punch.