

Review of the Times.



Whatever merits or demerits may attach to the present Dominion Government, it cannot be said that the sessions of Parliament under its guidance are unfruitful. It is only April, yet the work of legislation is over for the year,—and good work has been done,—practical, useful work, that will tell in a hundred ways upon the life of the Canadian people for years to come. It is refreshing to contrast such sessions of Parliament as we have had of late years with the barren and fruitless period when weeks and months were spent in interminable debate on party or constitutional questions. We perhaps dignify them too much to give them the latter name. Generally the squabbles were the purest pieces of faction fighting that ever disgraced the Parliamentary annals of any country. Tactics were often mere “dodging” and “victory at any price” was the watchword on both sides. Happily we have a truce from all this. A Ministry with so decided a majority as the present one can apply itself without hesitation and without distraction to practical business.

We have got, too, far beyond the “parish politics” of former days. Canada now is becoming a word to command respect wherever it is heard. A vast Dominion extending from ocean to ocean, with undreamed of possibilities of expansion and enlargement before it, is something worth legislating about; and it is striking to notice how thoroughly alive to this the rising young men of our country are. They who have been born and educated here, who have felt the full force of our free institutions, and our rapid expansion, while no less loyal to the mother land have yet a most peculiar love for their native Canada, and vast confidence in her future. All that has long characterized the people of the United States in their boundless faith in the possibilities of their land is characterizing the young Canadian statesman of

the present day; and it is a healthy sign that it should be so. There is “ample verge and room enough” for a large ambition here. We have legislated this session for the government of territories on the North-West almost as large as the whole of Europe. We have concluded a treaty by which quiet possession of lands is secured to the settlers therein, at the same time that justice is done to the Indian tribes that have hitherto been the only lords of the plains. We have taken steps for the prosecution of that vast railway work which is to bind together all the links in our great chain of Provinces and open up the way for millions of free people to spread themselves over the centre of the continent; and, although the Senate in the exercise of its wisdom, rejected a measure binding Canada to a specific yearly expenditure on the most distant link in this chain, yet the main work and the main object cannot and will not be lost sight of. We have, too, amended our Militia and Defence Acts—taking another step in the path of self-reliance and self-government. The mother country cannot now complain of Canada being a charge on her resources. And another step in the same direction is the establishment of a Supreme Court for the Dominion. This is a measure of the highest importance. It will prevent years of delay in the settlement of disputes. It will secure an appeal to those who have an intimate knowledge of our affairs; and though there may be wanting somewhat of the ripe experience and long practiced judgment that give such weight to the decisions of the law lords of the Privy Council, this will be fully counterbalanced by the superior knowledge of the circumstances and traditions of the various parts of our own country possessed by the judges who will decide these ultimate appeals.

The Insolvency Act is a measure which will have far reaching consequences. In-