

is generally supposed that members must be present for thirty days before they are entitled to their sessional allowance. Now the fact is that many of the M.P.'s may be present the thirty days, yet they may not be in the House. If a member goes to the House in time for a division he is all right. There may be only half a dozen divisions during the session, and the members may spend their time between the smoking-room, the bars, the dining-room, or in town, anywhere but in the House, and yet if they are in time for the division it counts more than if they had attended to their business. But this is the way our laws are made, and I suppose I may paraphrase John Bright and say that the first 206 men who pass down St. James street could make our laws just as well as the men for whom all the trouble of elections are gone through.

THE POLITICAL DESTINY OF CANADA.

BY JAMES LITTLE.

I was favoured, some twelve months ago, with the use of the columns of the SPECTATOR to bring to the notice of its readers the financial and other measures by which the country had been brought to its then deplorable condition, and the necessity that existed of a change in our political existence if we would ever make our way out of the Slough of Despond in which we had been for so many years forced to flounder, and in which so many thousands of our business men had sunk out of sight. I subsequently had the matter reprinted from the SPECTATOR, in pamphlet form, for public use.

I showed how Confederation, which was brought about by our squabbling party politicians, had forced the country into an expenditure of \$36,000,000 in building and equipping the Intercolonial Railway, which falls far short of paying running expenses, and is in fact worse than a dead loss to the country, which has to meet both that loss and the interest on its cost. I also showed how the country had been forced by Confederation into the wild, crazy and ruinous undertaking of building a railway across the continent—an undertaking sure to fill up the measure of our financial difficulties to overflowing, if not bring about the repudiation of our whole national obligations—and this, too, while it is admitted by the Government there is no real necessity of spending a dollar on such a road to facilitate the settlement of the North-West, which is made the pretext for its construction, and which, it is clear, must ultimately result in the ruin of the farming interests of Ontario and Quebec. In a pamphlet published by the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, and scattered broadcast over the country, we are told: "When a settler arrives at Quebec he can go via Chicago and St. Paul, in the United States, by rail, or he can take the railway from Quebec to either Sarnia or Collingwood, where he has the choice of two steamboat lines to the port of Duluth at the head of Lake Superior; from this point he will be conveyed by rail all the way to Manitoba." The above extract informs us that there are two routes actually in existence leading, with the Intercolonial Railway, from the eastern extremity of the Dominion to Manitoba, one of which is all rail, and the other rail and steamboat. And in the face of this the people of Ontario and Quebec, and their children after them, are to be saddled with a debt of untold scores of millions of dollars to build a railway no more necessary than the fifth wheel to a coach. But it will furnish ample means, for many years, to provide fortunes for the political supporters of our rulers, whichever party may be in power—a matter of paramount necessity in the management of our public affairs, no matter what the consequences to the tax-paying people. Our Agricultural Minister continues to further enlighten us in the pamphlet referred to. He informs us that the country—the North-West—possesses three thousand miles of navigable rivers, the Red River and Saskatchewan alone furnishing a thousand miles, a distance equal to that between the cities of Quebec and Chicago, and sufficient of themselves to afford room for immigrant settlers for half a century to come; and yet, notwithstanding such favourable facilities for the settlement of millions, you are to be taxed for the building of what the Government call colonization railways along those navigable streams and through the interior. But this is not the worst of it, so far as Ontario and Quebec are concerned. The Minister gives us the most glowing accounts he could gather from interested parties in the North-West and our late Governor-General—a head master in the art of humbuggery and soft soldering—of its immense crops, richness of soil, salubrity of climate, and illimitable dimensions, highly calculated and evidently intended to create feelings of dissatisfaction in the minds of the farming community of Ontario and Quebec with their lot, and induce all who can to pull up stakes at once and make their way to this agricultural Eldorado—a course which thousands have already taken—thousands continue on the move, and preparations are being made for a more extensive exodus on the opening of navigation, and during the summer months. "It is calculated," he says, "that when the branch of railway, now under contract to Thunder Bay, is completed" (another railway at your expense) "wheat may be taken from Winnipeg to Montreal for 15 cents a bushel, and thence to Liverpool by ocean steamers for 10 cents a bushel more. It is further estimated that it may be delivered by the farmer at Winnipeg at 55 cents; we have thus the fact of wheat from Manitoba on the wharf at Liverpool for 80 cents a bushel." The Governor-General is also made to congratulate

you in his speech from the Throne, "on the number of settlers who have during the past year come into the North-West from the older provinces of the Dominion." Here you are shown, ye farmers of Ontario, and all who are dependent on your industry for a living, that the Manitoban is able to deliver your great staple—wheat—at a profit in Liverpool nearly as cheap as you can deliver it in your own barns at home, and you are not only made to build railways, entailing a heavy tax on your industries to enable them to do so, but, as if in mockery, you are congratulated by the Government that Ontario and Quebec are being depopulated to that end. Even your new industry of cattle-raising, which you are looking forward to as a means of lifting you out of your difficulties, you are told is to be rendered fruitless by cattle raising and fattening without expense on the prairie grasses of the North-West. And all this while you stand stupidly looking on at being made the promoters of your own ruin.

Another unproductive mammoth outlay entailed on the country by confederation is the enlargement of the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals. The original cost of these canals was \$19,000,000; the loss in interest since they were built, \$32,000,000, and we are now enlarging them at a cost of \$30,000,000 more, in all \$91,000,000, to furnish cheap transportation to the grain growers of the North-Western States, and enable them to compete with our own farmers in foreign markets, and to sum up what Confederation will cost the country in the items of canals and railways and the North-West territory alone, we have:—

The cost of the Intercolonial Railway.....	\$36,000,000
The enlargement of the canals	30,000,000
The cost of the North-West Territory.....	1,500,000
The estimated cost of the Pacific and Colonization Railways, with rolling stock, equipments, &c., when completed.....	150,000,000
Making to the debit of Confederation.....	\$217,500,000

The interest on every cent of which, with half as much more to meet running expenses and repairs, must come out of the pockets of the toilers in the industries of the country. And the Press, being shackled to their respective party leaders, Messrs. Brown and Macdonald, who, in a fight for power, forced Confederation on Ontario and Quebec, abet this reckless squandering of money, and the ruin it must entail on the country, and not an independent voice is raised in Parliament, in the interest of the tax payers, or in protest against so suicidal a policy.

Our present taxation exceeds that of the United States by 20 per cent.; it amounts to one-third the exports and many millions more than the profits on the whole industries of the Dominion, a condition of things which no country, any more than an individual can long sustain, and when we have finished our present undertakings, general bankruptcy must be the result.

But we are now assured by our rulers and those who support them that the day of our prosperity is now in full and permanent blaze—that "the winter of our discontent is made glorious summer" by a National Policy, good demand, and high prices for the products of both field and forest, but no mention is made of the large amount of borrowed money the Dominion has spent on canals and railways, and Ontario and Quebec on the latter class of works in their respective Provinces, amounting together to at least forty millions of dollars, and enough of itself to have set the wheels of industry in successful motion in both Provinces, and surely, had there been a spark of vitality in our condition, the fortuitous circumstances of good crops, good prices, and the expenditure of so large an amount of money would have galvanized it into active life; but, in the face of all this, and the Ministerial flourish of trumpets of a great boom in all our industries, what do we hear? A wail of distress and complaint comes up from the Atlantic Provinces, rolls across the Continent, and is echoed back from British Columbia on the Pacific. The Eastern Provinces complain that they are shut out from a market for their crops of oats, hay, potatoes, &c., or, if marketed, it must be at half their value, and their adult population are forced to expatriate themselves "at the rate of a thousand a week, to secure a living in the United States," and British Columbia says: "At no time has business been in such a state of depression with the inevitable bankruptcy of the whole country imminent, unless that long-wished-for undertaking, the Pacific Railway, is commenced. On it depends the salvation of the Province. Unless a portion of the line on the Burrard Inlet route is put under construction, the insolvency of every man in the interior will ensue as a consequence." And so, to keep this valuable appendage of twelve to fifteen thousand fishermen and miners from bankruptcy, disrupting the Confederacy, and transferring their allegiance to the United States, we at once set about expending from twelve to fifteen millions of dollars—a thousand dollars a piece for every man, woman and child in the Province—in building a railway from Burrard Inlet, 127 miles long, to the Rocky Mountains, to enable them to freight their gold dust to the seaboard for shipment to the mint at San Francisco, and thus save "from insolvency every man in the interior." They are also calling for dry docks, graving docks, fortifications, &c. to protect them from the Russians, and I would strongly urge it on Sir John to keep these works in abeyance till the Burrard Inlet railway is built for the movement of their heavy freightage, as it may keep them in the Dominion for a few years longer while the works are being constructed.

(To be continued.)