

Province. The operation of the road, however, will still require an immense number of laborers of every description, and the question naturally arises, where will the labor centres of the company be located? The question affects greatly the value of the road to different places, and the progress of the company in this way will be watched with interest.

The assistance given by our Dominion to this great railway work necessitated the heaviest burden ever assumed by it, and cities, towns, corporations and individuals have followed the example, and by land gifts, bonuses and other perquisites materially aided the construction of the road. The first great effort by any city was certainly that put forth by the people of Winnipeg, when for a heavy money bonus and a donation of city lands they secured the Northwestern headquarters of the road and the location of the company's shops. This was no doubt the key note to many a money bonus and land gift which the company has since received.

It would not be out of place now to see how the C. P. R. Company fulfil the obligations assumed in consideration of these gifts. In Winnipeg the shops necessary for a depot for the Northwest were to be maintained, and during the year 1883 the employes in these shops numbered very little short of five hundred. This was when the road extended only a portion of the way to the Rocky Mountains, and when a smaller force should be necessary than now, when the line runs away through the Rockies. But singular to say, with the extension of the road westward, the importance of the Winnipeg shops has been on the wane, and at present the hands employed therein number very few if any over one hundred and fifty, and the decrease in number has been remarkably rapid during the past year. Had there been any corresponding increase at points west of this, the explanation would be clear, but that has not taken place beyond, not indeed in keeping with the demands of the new track opened. The inference to be drawn is very clear. The company have now secured communication over their own line with the east, and only such shop work as cannot possibly be sent east, will be done in the Northwest. Of course the semblance of shops at Winnipeg and other points in the Northwest where bonus terms demand it must be kept up, but the actual benefits conferred must go bodily

to some eastern point. The argument of a better labor market, and a better supply of skilled artisans may no doubt be well put forward by the company on this point, but it is worthy of notice, that as these difficulties have been disappearing, so has the desire of the C. P. R. managers to take advantage of the improvement. The fact is gradually forcing itself upon the most unwilling minds, that the C. P. R. is fast developing into a power for centralizing everything in the east at the expense of the west, and in no point will its influence in this direction be more strongly felt than in connection with labor. The number is every day increasing of people who believe that the C. P. R. is run not for the benefit of the public, not for the profit of the stockholders, but in the interests of the C. P. R. Syndicate and their friends and satellites, and this centralizing of labor in the east is done for the purpose of benefitting the latter.

### THE EXEMPTION ACT.

So far as the eastern press has been heard from on the subject of our new exemption law, there is as yet not a voice in its favor, from which we may infer that unbiased, or rather disinterested opinion is solid against the rascally measure. As in connection with many questions, while all agree in condemning the law, there is great diversity of opinion as to how it should be disposed of by the Dominion Government, and some usually well informed and ably written journals have adopted curious views of the matter. The *Montreal Herald* for instance attacks the law in a long and vigorous editorial, the style of which may be known from the following extract.

"As regards the confiscation of property, the repudiating of debts, the destruction of credit, the promotion of dishonesty, the wrongs, heart-burnings and suspicions of which this Manitoba Act will be the parent, no argument is needed to foretell their advent, and yet no prophet can set bounds to their limits. The Legislature that, from whatever motive, could place on its statute book a measure for wiping out the just debts which its citizens have contracted and are able to pay, can have no proper sense of its responsibility to public conscience. Apparently it cares nothing for the reputation of its people abroad."

Notwithstanding all this gush of righteous indignation on the part of our *Montreal* contemporary it coolly states, "We do not believe, however, that the Act is one which the Dominion Government have power to veto, and unless they want another rebellion on their hands, they will not attempt it."

The *Herald* must have been indulging in an overstudy of Canning lately, and imagined itself playing the role of the

"Friend of Humanity," and the honest industrious classes of Manitoba that of the "weary knife-grinder," for truly its sympathy partakes strongly of that of the condescending philanthropist (!) Its sympathy is actually touching when, dwelling on the inviolability of the British North American Act, it cites the following example for guidance at Ottawa.—

Sir John Macdonald undertook to right the wrong done to Peter McLaren—and that a grievous injury was done to him by the confiscatory legislation of Ontario there could be no doubt—but the Privy Council of England decided in favor of Ontario, and it was clearly established that a Province, while legislating within its constitutional rights, could do wrong if it wished. We don't suppose Sir John wants another McLaren-Caldwell case and another provincial rights agitation on his hands or if he does, the Dominion does not.

Through all its column and a half of editorial the *Herald* never for a moment questions, but in enacting the exemption law, Manitoba legislators were following the will of the people of the Province, whereas they were only following the dictates of the hopelessly insolvent and sheriff-proof dead beats, who make up nearly two-thirds of our Provincial Legislature, and to get the exemptions made law they had them smuggled through in the stomach of a huge bill entitled "An Act respecting the Administration of Justice," the first half of which refers almost entirely to criminal affairs. And here again we may inform our eastern contemporary that scarcely a legal man who has read the criminal provisions of this legislative conglomeration, but declares them to be *ultra vires*, so that there is no lack of grounds on which the Dominion Government may exercise its veto powers, and free the prairie province from a law which must block its progress, sap its vitality, and now stands a legislative libel upon its honest and industrious citizens.

We will be plain in this matter, and state that the *Herald* writer has evidently not taken the trouble to read through the Manitoba "Act respecting the Administration of Justice" of 1885. The undertaking is quite a heavy one, we admit, and will not supply much valuable information for the labor. But we feel certain that it would change the opinion of the *Herald* regarding the powers and duty of the Dominion Government on the matter. The editorial we have quoted from we must accept as a nice little lecture upon Manitoba naughtiness, based upon a misconception or two, and as to the sympathy it contains it reminds us of an illustration which appeared once before in THE COMMERCIAL, of the hardened old Scotch hangman, who wiped the tears from the eyes of the condemned criminal he was pinioning, and with mock soothing remarked, "Dinna greet mon, I'll be as cawny as I can wi' ye."