

THE WEEK.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JULY 15th, 1892.

\$3.00 per Annum.
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

Ninth Year.
Vol. IX., No. 33.

THE WEEK:

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART

TERMS:—One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.00. Subscriptions payable in advance.
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European Agents—SMITH, AINSLIE & Co., 25 Newcastle Street, Strand London.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

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THE appalling disaster which has befallen the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, has touched a chord of brotherly sympathy which is vibrating throughout the Dominion. Nothing could be better adapted to mitigate the horrors of such a spectacle as that presented to the mind's eye in the smoking ruins of a fallen city, with ten thousand homeless men, women, and children, terror-stricken and destitute, in the background, than the view of a kindred people hurrying spontaneously to the rescue with shiploads of the necessities and comforts of life. While we shrink from the cruel philosophy which would regard such disasters as permitted to take place in order to call forth and stimulate the charity of the onlookers and thus improve their characters, it cannot be denied that the sympathy and generosity thus evoked have often a most salutary effect upon all concerned. The matter of time in this instance is an important element in the problem of relief, but if the help can be forwarded with sufficient promptness, there seems little reason to fear that the liberality of the people of Canada, the United States, and the Mother Country will not prove equal to the occasion, large as its demands must be for weeks and months to come. In view of the recent unhappy misunderstanding, the opportunity is a noble one for Canada to bury any unpleasant memories of the past which may linger in the minds of Canadian or Newfoundlander, beneath an avalanche of generous giving and sympathetic feeling. Who knows that the beneficent Power which delights to be ever evoking good out of the world's teeming ills, may not make this calamity the means of bringing about that better understanding and agreement between our colonial cousins and ourselves which no considerations of kinship or of mutual profit have hitherto been able to effect?

THE Minister of Finance laid on the table in the Commons the other day a document which is of considerable interest as setting forth formally and clearly the Government's position in the matter of the canal tolls dispute. This paper is a copy of a report of a committee of the Privy Council approved of by his Excellency June 17, 1892. Its gist is contained in the following passage:—
It is alleged that the Canadian rule creates discrimina-

tion between the two nationalities on the ground that permission is given to vessels of both nationalities to tranship cargoes destined for Montreal at an intermediate Canadian port without forfeiting the claim of rebate, while vessels of neither nationality can receive rebate if their cargoes are transhipped at an American port. Strictly speaking, this creates no inequality in the use of the canals, though it undoubtedly does discriminate against the United States ports as points of transhipment. The United States vessel may obtain its rebate precisely as a Canadian vessel can, by transhipping its cargo (if transhipment is necessary) at a Canadian port, and, on the other hand, neither Canadian nor United States vessels can obtain a rebate if they tranship at a United States port. It is plain that Canada allows the use of her canals both to her own vessels and to those of the United States upon such conditions as to influence a certain class of the traffic to pass down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, but in the inducement thus held out it makes no distinction as respects the payment for the use of its canals between the vessels of the United States and its own.

This is a frank statement of the case. Is it a valid defence of the course of the Canadian Government? That depends clearly upon the sense in which the obligation of a treaty between two nations is to be interpreted. Are honourable nations to be guided by the letter or by the spirit of such a contract? If by the letter, the position of the Canadian Government is perhaps unassailable. If by the spirit or obvious intention of the agreement, it is clearly untenable. Apart from the fundamental ethical principle involved, it would surely be a lamentable thing from the merely practical point of view should the latter law of interpretation prevail, inasmuch as its legitimate outcome would be that the moment a treaty was concluded between two powers, each would set the ingenuity of its statesmen and lawyers at work to discover the minimum of obligation involved in the language used, and what opportunity could be found for keeping the word of promise to the ear, or rather to the eye, while breaking it to the hope. Nor can any one, remembering the well-earned reputation of American diplomats for shrewdness, doubt that our Canadian Ministers would soon find that two can play at a game of that kind. But worse still, the effect of the tacit adoption of such a rule of interpretation would be to undermine the foundations of mutual trust in mutual honour in dealings between nations and to make international conferences a contest of wits between two sets of political sharpers. Would it not, therefore, be vastly better from every point of view to let it be understood that in agreements between nations the same principles are operative as in similar transactions between individuals? A judicial and ethical authority has put these principles into a shape in which they commend themselves to the judgment and conscience of every honourable man, in the admirable dictum that a contract is morally binding in the sense in which the party of the one part believed it to be understood by the party of the other part at the time of making. Can any one doubt what the effect of the application of this rule would be in the interpretation of Article 27 of the Washington Treaty? Can it be supposed that the representatives of the United States would have made or ratified this article in the existing terms, had they foreseen that it would be interpreted in such a way as to draw away trade from American ports and at the same time virtually discriminate against American vessels?

THE report above quoted proceeds to say that by Article 30 of the treaty it was agreed that the United States might suspend the right granted to British subjects of carrying in British vessels, duty free, goods from one place within the United States to another, provided that a portion of the transhipment were made through Canada by land carriage or in bond, in case their citizens were discriminated against in the use of Canadian canals. In 1885 this right was suspended, thus exacting from Canada the penalty for discriminating in the use of the canals, although no inequality really existed. Therefore, if the present rule could be construed as constituting an inequality, the penalty agreed upon has already been exacted by the United States. This somewhat singular statement opens up a new phase of the ethical question. If a state or an individual contracts to do a certain thing with the proviso that in case of failure a certain penalty

may be inflicted, may the obligation be cancelled by submission to the penalty? That, however, may be left to the casuists. If it seem somewhat strange that the United States should have seemingly anticipated a failure on the part of the Dominion Government to observe the clause of the treaty under consideration, and so made special provision for such a contingency, the explanation is probably to be found in the fact that the arrangement was made with Great Britain and was in form but an engagement on the part of the Mother Country to "urge upon the Government of the Dominion," etc. The singular thing on the part of our Government is that, holding as it does that the terms of the treaty have been faithfully observed, it has made no more vigorous protest during these six or seven years against the violation of which the United States has, from its point of view, been guilty, in withholding the stipulated privileges from Canadian vessels, and that it is now willing, in consideration of a restoration of those rights, which should never have been withdrawn, to surrender what it holds to be an additional right on its own part. This seems not only to be carrying conciliation to the extreme, but to be actually putting a premium upon the unjust withdrawal, by the United States Government, of a treaty privilege.

THE first annual meeting of the Dominion Educational Association, which took place last week in Montreal, seems to have been on the whole a successful gathering. While the attendance was not so large as the more sanguine promoters of the movement hoped for and predicted, and while the enthusiasm evoked may have fallen a good deal below that which characterizes the corresponding meetings of our American cousins, the influence of the meetings and discussions can hardly fail to tell with considerable effect in promoting the chief ends in view, the drawing together of the educational workers of the different Provinces of the Dominion in sympathy, and the comparison of views and methods for mutual advantage. Hon. G. W. Ross, the Minister of Education for Ontario, in one of those glowing addresses which constituted a somewhat marked feature of the meetings, asked the question: "Are we going to be Provincial in education, or national?" The question sounds well, but if it was meant for anything more than rhetorical effect, it would be interesting to have the Minister define what he would understand by national education under the Canadian Constitution, which distinctly relegates the work of public education to the Provinces. We do not suppose that Mr. Ross meant to hint at any possibility of disturbing this arrangement, or that he would approve of such a change, even were such possible, as would be required in order to make Canadian education national in any strict interpretation of the word. He no doubt meant to intimate the desirability that there should be more of the Canadian as distinct from the Provincial spirit infused into the atmosphere of the schoolroom and college hall. This is greatly to be desired if the Dominion is ever to become consolidated. As Mr. Ross truthfully said, our Confederation is not as solidified as it ought to be. There can be no doubt that the public schools and colleges might become and ought to become one of the most powerful of agencies for effecting this consolidation.

HOW is this educational influence to be brought to bear for the solidifying of the Confederation? That is the practical question. It is perhaps to be regretted that Mr. Ross and others who took a leading part in the conduct of the meetings of the Dominion Educational Association did not address themselves more directly to the task of finding a practical answer. The Ontario Minister did, it is true, hint at one important modification of the existing Provincial systems which, if made, could not fail to have considerable effect in promoting a national sentiment. He referred to the method of granting teachers' certificates in Ontario, under his own jurisdiction. No matter what or how thorough the examination which a teacher may have undergone in another Province, he has to pass another in Ontario before being allowed to practice his profession here. Nothing could be better adapted to keep the different provinces of the Dominion in a state of