

A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT OR REVOLUTION.

Denmark is just now upon the verge of a revolution, the consequences of which cannot fail to be disastrous to King Christian and his self appointed Ministry, and may have the effect of estranging the loyalty of an otherwise loyal people. For many years the representatives of the Danes in the Folkthing have been endeavouring by peaceful means to bring about a change in the Constitution, so as to make the Ministry responsible to the people for its acts. This reform the King and the Court circle have frustrated by every means in their power, and the members of the Folkthing have been obliged to resort to extraordinary means, in order to convince the Sovereign that they were earnest in the matter. Meantime, the general want of confidence in the Government, and the uncertainty as to the outcome of the agitation has created a panic in financial circles. Trade, in consequence, has been crippled, and the people in the country districts have been pressed for the payment of outstanding liabilities which they are at present unable to meet. The bankruptcies which have followed each other in close succession among the trading classes, have called for the foreclosure of the mortgages held upon a large percentage of the farms. The factories having been closed down, the farmer is obliged to sell his produce at starvation prices, and finds it impossible to liquidate the debts which have for many years been accumulating. The distress among the agrarian population has now become so general, that unless the present strain between the Government and the people is speedily relieved, an outbreak will be inevitable. King Christian has the control of the army, and may, for a time, be able to thwart the wishes of the people; but as the Folkthing holds the purse strings, he must, sooner or later, yield to its just demands, and grant to the people of Denmark those rights to which they are justly entitled.

THE PANAMA CANAL.

Paterson, the founder of the ill-fated Darien Colony of 1698, wrote to the Darien Company, that by utilizing the Isthmus of Panama "the time and expense of navigation to China, Japan, and the Spice Islands, and the greater part of the East Indies, would be lessened more than one-half, and the consumption of European commodities and manufactures would be more than doubled." Paterson's attempt at colonization ended most disastrously; but the great idea which he originated has become the nucleus of a gigantic enterprise, now in a fair way to completion. Many schemes have been set on foot for a great inter-oceanic passage through the Isthmus. Since 1855, a railway which has been of immense advantage to commerce has furnished the means of exchanging cargoes for ships in the Atlantic and Pacific respectively. To avoid the expense and delay of this double transshipment, the project of cutting the Isthmus by a canal has long been cherished; and various routes and schemes have been suggested by different engineers. At length, six or seven years ago, M. DeLesseps, backed by a committee of the *Academie des Sciences*, took up the scheme. It was found that the narrowest part of the Isthmus, between the town of Panama on the Pacific Coast, and the Bay of San Blas on the Atlantic, is 30½ miles across, and that 16 miles would have to be added for deviations. DeLesseps proposes to utilize the valleys of the Chagres on the Atlantic and the Rio Grande on the Pacific side. Between these valleys lies a ridge of high ground, 8½ miles across, and 147 feet high, through which the canal will have to pass. The total amount of cutting is estimated at 100,000,000 cubic yards, one half of which are in the rock. The greatest difficulty in the way of the engineers is the control of the floods on the River Chagres, which are liable to damage the canal during the rainy season. To check these, a dam 131 feet high is being built at Gamboa. The total cost of the works as estimated by the Technical Commission, will be £34,000,000; according to the estimate of the contractors, £20,500,000.

Although work is being done on twenty-one sections of the canal, yet there are many who regard the success of the undertaking as far from certain. A report to the New York Chamber of Commerce predicts the exhaustion of funds, long before the work is half completed; and declares that, in any case, the cost would be so great that canal tolls, in order to pay, would render the canal practically useless. In view of this fact, it seems like a very bold enterprise on the part of the American Government to have procured from the government of Nicaragua the right to build a canal through that part of the Isthmus.

The construction of this canal derives its chief importance from the rapidly increasing trade of the United States with the Pacific States of South America, and from its possible employment by Britain as an alternative to the use of the tedious and unsatisfactory passage by the Suez Canal. The value of the United States imports and exports, which it is supposed will pass through the canal, was \$93,677,000 in the year 1884. So unsatisfactory to British shipping is the management of the Suez Canal, that about 50 per cent. of the imports from the East and Australia, and 30 per cent. of the exports to these parts still passes around the Cape of Good Hope! Should trade become diverted from the Suez to the Panama route, the latter will become the great commercial high-way of the world.

JUSTICE TO CAPE BRETON—JUSTICE!

This cry seems to some people stale and out of place when heard in our Legislative halls. But if such a watchword of past years be still used in the Press and in Parliament, whose is the fault? Does not the blame attach to successive Governments which refused, defiantly and repeatedly refused, to accede to the reasonable demands of a part of the Province that has long been a generous contributor to the Provincial Treasury? No one, surely, can fairly censure the representatives and friends of Cape Breton for declining to throw aside an old rallying cry, of which the principle, as they refrain, is only Justice, and which naturally will continue to be used with accelerated

power each succeeding year whilst the grievances which called it forth continue to exist.

It is a marvel to us that some gentlemen representing counties in Nova Scotia Proper in the Assembly have lived so long in apparent ignorance of a fact that ought to be all-important to every legislator, viz., that the best interests of the whole Province are now suffering through trade and revenue, from the unjust discrimination which has too long been exercised against the interests of Cape Breton. The coal royalties now obtained from that Island are certainly very considerable, and the trade between it and Halifax and other parts of Nova Scotia Proper is also of moment; but if the Government of this Province had in time favored the Island with such railways as were there most needed, and as the Island's own contributions to our revenue entitled her to, that revenue and that trade would to-day be tenfold greater. This Province would now have the advantages of more flourishing home industries, of better and more constant markets, of a larger coal trade, and of a more satisfactory state of commerce generally.

The demands of Cape Breton would be strong if only for the fact that she has contributed ten million dollars to the Dominion and Local revenues without receiving in return anything beyond the merest scraps of patronage and these only for the most general and absolutely undeniable requirements. It would scarcely be just that the County of Shelburne, for instance, should one year after another contribute to the public funds over \$500,000, and from those funds be allowed annually to draw less than \$100,000, while in various ways the best interests of Shelburne were suffering for want of a larger allowance. But the claims of Cape Breton have in their favor, in addition to the arguments indicated, another which makes them irresistibly cogent and clear to every fair and unobtuse mind. Here it is: if that Island should shortly receive its due proportion of money to be judiciously spent in supplying its *very* "long-felt wants" of railway facilities, etc., its vast and valuable resources would soon be developed into a form that might justly be considered the actual floating capital of the country; its expanded trade and its enlarged capacity of yielding revenue would alike be of the highest advantage to the whole Province, especially to those Counties that are weak in the number and extent of their resources.

For any M.-P., or M. P. P., that cannot see the force of Cape Breton's claims and of her plea for justice, we entertain the most profound feelings of sympathy, but not the warmest of regard or the strongest of respect.

When the matter of railways is brought before the House of Assembly, the people of Cape Breton will watch closely the Government and their representatives; and we sincerely hope that we and our Island friends will have reason to be satisfied with the railway legislation of the present session.

Justitia fiat. vult coelum—Justice to Cape Breton included

INSURANCE, NOT BANKING.

Investment is one thing, insurance is quite another. When a man pays his fire insurance premium, he simply pays for one year's immunity from loss by fire. The year passes, and his property has not burned; he expects no return of money paid; he has had what he bought, one year's peace of mind; the commodity perished in the using; the premium was money invested only in the sense that the price of his food and worn-out clothing was money invested. There is no confusion here, no confusion as to what marine insurance or accident insurance is; but when we approach life insurance, and are told of "surrender values," "paid-up policies," "bonus additions," "Tontines," "cash-dividends," and the like, our ideas of what insurance is must all be remodelled—in fact, confusion reigns. The explanation of the mystery lies in the fact that, though the contract issued by the life-company is called an insurance contract, and though the insured pays an undivided premium, yet under that single contract and undivided premium the company is transacting two separate and distinct kinds of insurances—insurance and banking. A small portion of the premium is used to pay the insurance risk, the residue, after paying expenses, is treated as an investment on the policy. Considering the insurance branch of the business by itself, we have a complete analogy with fire and marine insurance; considering the investment or banking branch by itself, we have every element of mystery and speculation which distinguishes the business as a whole from insurance, as illustrated in the fire, marine, and accident business. The banking has no more real connection with the insurance than if it were transacted by a bank across the street; it is no more a necessary attachment to life insurance than to fire and marine insurance. No insurance authority claims for a moment that the combination is essential either to the safety of the insurance or the productiveness of the investments; but the wisest among them have pointed to the fact which is attested by sad experience, that the safety of the insurance branch is prejudiced by the dangers incident to the banking operations. A fire insurance agent who should propose to one of our merchants that he pay several times his present rate under a promise of annual dividends, Tontine profits, paid-up policy, or endowment, would be readily dismissed with the information that the merchant wanted only insurance from his company, and felt quite capable of attending to his own investments; and we are convinced that if men had been educated from the first to contract their life insurance solely for the protection of their dependents, any attempt at this day to burden the cost with investments from which personal returns could be promised would meet with no more favor. If the desire for immunity from personal loss has made fire insurance a necessary institution, surely the greater desire of all true men for the permanent well-being of those for whom they live and toil would have brought a system of pure life insurance, stripped of all schemes of investment and speculation with their attendant burden—such a system as that now practiced by the Dominion Safety Fund Life Association of St. John, N. B.—into such prominence that society would hold it a reproach for any man, on the continuance of whose life depends the comforts of others, to remain uninsured.