

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE Industrial Exhibition which is now open in this city bids fair, we believe, to surpass all that have gone before it in the extent and completeness of the exhibits made in the various departments. Great credit is due to the indefatigable President and other managers to whose well-directed and untiring efforts the success of this annual exhibition is so largely due. It would not be easy to over-estimate the value for educational as well as commercial purposes of this periodical bringing together of the best that the country produces in its various lines of art and industry, for purposes of study and comparison. No one who is engaged in any kind of productive industry can fail, if he possesses an open mind and an observant eye, to gain many profitable hints from the study of what others are doing, perhaps doing very much better or more cheaply, in the same sphere. The student of natural history will find in some of the departments, as, for instance, in that set apart for fishes, a rare opportunity for viewing such a variety of living specimens as is not often brought together within the reach of a Canadian student. The same remark, with modifications, will hold true of almost every thoughtful visitor, no matter in what special line of science or of productive industry his aptitudes may lie. There can be no doubt that such exhibitions have done and are doing very much in the way of stimulating enterprise and giving fresh impulse to ingenuity and effort in almost every department of human activity.

THE fact that existing (Canadian) difficulties are discussed freely, generally, interestedly and intelligently, with a view to their solution, is no proof of threatened disintegration, but is rather an indication of healthy life and vigour." These words of a correspondent in our last issue are not only true but susceptible of a wider application than the writer probably intended. That two Canadians, separated by so vast a stretch of Canadian territory as that which unites Halifax and Edmonton, should meet in the columns of the same journal to discuss Canadian affairs is, in itself, a suggestive and hopeful incident. The affairs of a country of such magnificent

proportions are surely worth serious consideration. That there is much in the present situation that calls for free, full, earnest, dispassionate discussion will, we think, be generally admitted. We know not what "True Canadian," who takes up the cudgels so vigorously against the idea of Canadian Independence, in last issue, may think, but we have yet to find the man of intelligence and foresight who believes it possible for Canada to retain its present status for any considerable length of time. That radical change of some kind is inevitable in the near future is, unless we greatly misread the indications, the fixed impression of the great majority of Canadian thinkers. It is not strange that this should be so, and that it should give rise to a growing unrest. The Colonial relation, as a first stage in the process of national development, is natural and beneficent. As a permanent condition for five or six millions of people, having both genius and training for self-government, and possessing a country covering half a continent, it would be unnatural and humiliating. England herself would despise her degenerate sons if they were content to cherish no higher ambition. We see no reason to doubt that in the minds of many of the foremost British statesmen of past and present times, ultimate independence is regarded as the only legitimate goal of each of the great colonies, now in the higher stages of national development. To the more broad-minded and thoughtful the transition to complete self-government seems as natural and necessary, and as little to be deprecated, as the acceptance of the duties and responsibilities of manhood by the son after he has attained his majority under the parental roof.

IF argument were needed to show that the Colonial relation, as now existing between Canada and Great Britain, cannot be permanent, it would scarcely be necessary to do more than point to what takes place when one of those disputes which "True Canadian" regards as inevitable between two countries in such proximity as Canada and the United States, arises. What could be more vexatious and, may we not add, ineffective, than the present roundabout method? Canada, however aggrieved, perhaps by the mere excess of zeal of some United States subordinate official, cannot go direct to Washington for frank and manly discussion. "It is no matter," as the American journals just now are telling us with more truth than courtesy, "what Canada thinks." The remonstrance intended for the Washington administration has to be forwarded to London, there, perhaps, to be pigeon-holed for an indefinite period to await the leisure of Imperial statesmen, whose hands are more than full of matters of pressing interest nearer home, and who, at best, cannot be expected to give the time and attention necessary to a mastery of the case, in its implications and details. If they should be at times disposed to be somewhat impatient of the importunate colony, which seems so prone to get them into trouble with the great nation with which they have the strongest reasons, financial and political, for wishing to remain at peace, who could blame them? And then, what are the final results? Let the Atlantic Coast Fisheries dispute, still unsettled after long years of diplomatic correspondence; let the outrages perpetrated year after year, with the utmost *sans froid*, and with perfect impunity, upon Canadian sealers in the North Pacific, answer. Could Canadian management of the business, however unequal she might be in point of strength, have led to worse results? We are not blaming England. We are simply hinting at facts which illustrate the present working of the colonial relation and show why it is rapidly becoming intolerable. But we need not pursue the subject, for we do not believe that even "True Canadian," having very carefully studied the future destiny of Canada, will maintain that for her to continue much longer as a Colony is either possible or desirable.

ASSUMING, then, that radical change must come, what shall it be? "True Canadian" does not tell us. Annexation is out of the question. On that, all, with insignificant exceptions, seem agreed. Imperial Federation as a grand idea has many attractions, but, every effort to bring it down from the clouds, and within the limits of definite and practical conceptions, has so far failed. May

we not go further and say that every such effort has thus far but resulted in making the impracticability of the dream more apparent? We have dealt with it before and need not repeat our arguments. Suffice it to say that one of its prime, indispensable conditions, the setting up of a power or tribunal of some sort superior in authority to the British Parliament, is such a condition that its mere statement is equivalent, for every one who recalls the history, traditions, and present *prestige* of the British Parliament, to a *reductio ad absurdum*. What, then, remains? Independence or—nothing. The gist of the arguments so forcibly urged against Independence may be given in three words, weakness, poverty, ingratitude. Independent Canada would, unquestionably, be weak in comparison with her mighty neighbour. What then? Has no nation, in this age of civilization and Christianity, any right to exist but that measured by its military and naval strength? Are there no free and independent weak nations, dwelling in peace and safety beside stronger ones, in Christendom? Did little Switzerland go to the wall when her autonomy was threatened the other day by her great neighbour? Pushed to its logical conclusion the argument from weakness would leave room for but one nation in the world, as there can be but one absolutely the strongest. And so with the argument from comparative poverty. It is unfortunate, though perhaps, unavoidable, that Canada is so deeply in debt, but that makes all the stronger reason why she should do all in her power to attract capital and population for the development of her great resources. The idea that nothing could be done without an immense army and navy and a large and costly diplomatic service is an Old World idea. We see no reason why the New should not introduce a new and better order of things. Suppose, for instance, Canada's first act, as an independent nation, should be to enter into a treaty with the United States, providing that every dispute then existing, or afterwards arising, should be settled by arbitration in a manner definitely outlined and fixed. We have no great admiration for the character and methods of the professional politicians across the border, but we have sufficient faith in the good sense and Christian integrity of the people and the honest friendliness they would have for a kindred American nation, to believe that they would promptly enter into such an arrangement. And then what further need of costly armaments?

A WORD as to the argument from sentiment. Let us not be misunderstood. We are not, as "True Canadian" seems to imagine, urging secession, rebellion, or any other horrible crime against the Mother Country. We yield not even to our fervid correspondent in our loyalty to Great Britain, and our admiration of all that is grand and noble in her history and literature, and in the character of her people. We appreciate, too, the wise magnanimity which has characterized her colonial policy, though our historical recollections fail to supply us with an instance in which her gallant sons have stood between us and a destruction that was not threatened us on her account, not our own. Nor, though we cheerfully and gratefully acknowledge that for our cherished freedom—our liberty to think, to vote, to speak, to act—we are in a real sense indebted to the example and assistance of Britain, are we able to recall an instance in which a concession in the direction of political freedom and self-government has been granted us save at our own urgent demand, if not almost under compulsion. But let that pass. Our sin is that we deem it wise for Canadians to look forward as well as backward; and that it may be, possibly, the first duty of a "true Canadian" to be loyal to Canada. We urge no hasty movement, no rash breaking with the historic past. But realizing that the day is drawing near, in the course of events over which we have no control, when a new departure will be inevitable; realizing, too, that as an outcome both of sentiment and of lack of diplomatic and commercial liberty, Canadian *prestige* is lowered, and Canadian progress retarded by the disabilities inseparable from a relation of dependency, we urge that, when the day of necessary choice is fully come—whether in five years or in twenty-five—Canadians should be prepared to take the only course consistent with their own self-respect, and the brave traditions of their