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### Comments on the Customs.



A VISION OF THE NEAR FUTURE.—If the case now pending in the Supreme Court is decided in favor of the C.P.R. Co.—and the clauses of the Railway Act upon which the Syndicate has taken its stand seem so clear as to make that highly probable—then there is trouble in store for the "Old Man" at the coming session of Parliament. The Act provides, not that a Provincial line may not cross a line under Federal control, but that as a result of the crossing the local line passes, legislatively, out of the hands of the local authorities, and into those of the Dominion Minister of Railways. It is not likely that Manitobans will for one moment contemplate this disposition of the road they have been at such trouble

to build. They know only too well that Dominion control would mean C.P.R. control, the very thing they have spent their time and money to overcome. And yet the crossing must be made, if the Red River Valley line is to be completed. Nothing remains, therefore, but to secure the repeal of the clauses of the Railway Act in which the Province finds itself entrapped—and under which almost any Provincial line hereafter built in the Dominion will find itself similarly fixed. Mr. Greenway will, no doubt, make a demand for the repeal, and a measure to this end will be introduced in the House of Commons. Just here, if things take their usual course at Ottawa, the fun will begin for the Canadian taxpayer. The C.P.R. will demand a few more millions of a "loan," as the only condition upon which it will permit the Government to repeal the clauses, and the astute gentlemen of the Cabinet, after wrestling in

vain with the adamant Van Horne in private, will be prepared to prove to the House that the demand is most reasonable and modest, and that the grand future of this country and the glory of the "old flag" require that Parliament assent to it. This appeal to the higher nature of the Government members will be effective, except in the case of the Quebec contingent, which, like that great Washington patriot and statesman, the Hon. Bardwell Slote, always "go in for the Old Flag—and an appropriation." The Province is in pressing need of more funds just now, and, although it is under a nominally Liberal Government, Mr. Chapleau and his colleagues are not likely to let such a golden opportunity pass them by. The effective little drama of Room No. 8 will be played again, and the ultimate result of the whole affair will be, that, on account of the stupid insertion of a couple of entirely unnecessary and harmful clauses in the Railway Act, in the face of Mr. Blake's warning and protest, a very formidable sum will be added to our public debt. Such a vision as this, we venture to say, has been passing through the Premier's mind of late, as he has dozed off in his easy chair at Earncliffe. The already overtaxed citizens of this country will have reason to rejoice if it turns out to be nothing more than a mere vision.

MAC. BOWELL & CO.'S SHOOTING GALLERY.—In casting about for something whereunto we might liken Canadian consumers, as they are regarded in the philosophy of the Protectionist Government, we thought of the "figgers" employed by the shooting-gallery fakir, and, to our thinking, the analogy is very complete. The fakir prizes his "figgers" as a source of revenue, but entertains no sentiment of personal love or pity for them whatever. They are simply there to be popped at by whoever likes to pay for a shot. Just so are the farmer, the clerk and the artizan in the economy of that precious fake, the N.P. The Minister of Customs appreciates them as tax paying entities, but he does not regard them at all in their capacity as human beings. The monopolist, ringster or combination who comes along and is willing to deal liberally toward the campaign fund, is allowed to pepper away at the helpless dummies to his heart's content, giving them inferior goods at superior prices. Just as in the case of the shooting-gallery figures, Canadian consumers are fastened in their places, fixed immovably in the home market. The policy of Restriction is, of course, best—for the fellows who do the shooting; and to reconcile the dummies to their lot and make them perfectly content, the establishment does business under the name of the "Old Flag." There is one point in which, happily, the simile fails. Shooting-gallery figures were never known to revolt, whereas citizens of a free country do sometimes rise up and rid themselves of fraudulent systems under which, in the name of "Protection," the many are robbed of the benefit of the few.



HAKESPERIAN titles explained poetically:—Much Ado About Nothing—Imperial Federation; A Comedy of Errors—the North-West Land Policy; As You Like It—The Fishery Treaty; The Tempest—Provincial Rights Question; Measure for Measure, Retaliation; Love's Labor's Lost—Mr. Mowat's Exertions for Manitoba; All's Well that Ends Well—the Inauguration of Free Trade in Canada; Taming of the Shrew—Goldwin Smith trying to quiet the Empire; A Midsummer Night's Dream—The French Conquest of Canada; Two Gentlemen of Verona—Tom and Jerry.

IT isn't often that a better illustration of Æsop's fable of the "Countryman and the Snakes" is given than is presented in the case of Rev. Mr. Jeffrey and the Board of the Western Methodist church. This well-disposed man, having found a number of officials in a "frozen-out" condition, brought them into the Church again, where they might enjoy the warmth of Christian fellowship. No sooner were they thawed out than they turned