

It would be an ungrateful task and one for which we have no inclination, to attempt to lessen the force of the statistics quoted by Lord Stanley and Mr. Foster, to prove that Canada is making some progress. It would be a lamentable state of things indeed, if this young, undeveloped country, with all its immense stores of natural wealth in farm and forest, and mine and sea, were in an absolutely stationary condition. But one could not read or hear these rose-coloured addresses without being at once reminded of other figures such as those given us by our census enumerators, and by those of the United States, to which neither of the orators, we believe, made any reference. The obvious truth is, that the question of questions now before the country is not whether some advance is being made along certain lines, and a degree of prosperity enjoyed by certain classes, but whether the progress of the whole country, in the growth of its population and the development of its varied resources, is all that could reasonably be expected under the best attainable conditions. It cannot escape notice, too, that the growth in commerce, on which the Minister of Finance especially dwelt, has taken place mainly in connection with the British market—a market which has always been open, and which has not been made more accessible by any act or policy of the Canadian Government. Would, or would not, the development of our trade with Great Britain, which no one proposes to lose or disparage, be more rapid but for the obstacles we put in its way by our tariff? Would, or would not, the obtaining of better trade relations with the United States foster a profitable commerce with that country in a class of commodities which cannot be sent to or procured from Great Britain? These and a dozen similar questions arise and confront us at once, when we attempt to draw satisfaction from Mr. Foster's statistics. And then, what about our inability to keep our young men from crossing the border by tens of thousands, as soon as they reach manhood? Has the Government's trade policy hindered or stimulated this one-sided and most undesirable exportation?

Out of the balanced generalities to which Sir John Thompson was almost of necessity shut up, it would be folly to attempt to extract any clear indications of intention in regard to the matters about which the whole country is just now not only curious but anxious. His admission that our trade policy must necessarily be affected by that of the United States may lead logically to the conclusion that we must wait a year or two in order to discover what our neighbours are going to do in the way of tariff reduction, but that conclusion will hardly satisfy the country or meet the necessities of the present Canadian situation. At the same time, Sir John dexterously relieved the minds of those whose apprehensions might be aroused by the prospect of so long a delay by his clear admission that there are defects both in the framing and in the administration of the present tariff which require a remedy, and his declared intention "to lop the mouldering branch away." The absence of jingoism and the sweet reasonableness and general friendliness of tone in Sir John's references to the United

States were pleasing as they are becoming in the de facto ruler of Canada, and there is good reason to hope that these sentiments may be reciprocated by the incoming Washington administration. Sir John's statement in reference to the canal dispute, to the effect that the cause of grievance has been removed, may, we assume, be understood to mean that the objectionable discrimination against American ports will not be renewed another season.

No one who has compared the two systems can doubt that His Excellency, the Governor-General, was justified in claiming for Canada, under her present Constitution, that the power of the people to impose their will upon Government and to embody it in executive action is more direct and complete than that of the people of the United States; that for all practical purposes the Provinces have at least a large measure of freedom and a wide and satisfactory latitude in managing their own affairs, and that our judicial system will compare very favourably even with that of the Mother Country. So far as we are aware, no one desires constitutional change for Canada in order to remove alleged grievances touching any of these matters. Whatever growth of Canadian opinion there is in the direction of Canadian Independence—like His Excellency, we may let the question of political union with the United States severally alone—and unless we entirely misread the signs of the times, there is a steady growth of such opinion, has its origin largely in the sense of inferiority which necessarily attaches to the colonial position, both in the eyes of the Mother Country and in those of foreign nations, and in the disabilities which are inseparable from such a position. To this is mainly attributable, in the opinion of many, the weakness so often deplored of the feeling of Canadian patriotism, as such. Connected with this is the consciousness of inability to negotiate directly with other nations, and in general the absence of the chief prerogatives of nationality. It might even be said that the very fact to which Lord Stanley points as having peculiar advantages, viz., that our chief ruler is sent to us periodically across the sea, is one of the most conspicuous badges of this political inferiority, notwithstanding the very high respect we may have for the distinguished noblemen so sent from time to time. As to the familiar argument derived from our immunity from the turmoil incident upon the periodical choice of a ruler, it is obviously one of those which prove too much, as it might be urged with equal force in favour of a nominated legislature, to save us from the turmoil of the general election. Its force tells, in fact, against the elective system and responsible government.

It would be an invidious and unworthy thing for a Canadian to carp at or seek to minimize the statistics quoted by our sanguine Minister of Finance in proof of Canada's prosperity. Some of the facts adduced by him are full of encouragement as showing the extent of the country's resources. Some of them, those relative to the growth of the cheese-making industry, for example, are also very instructive in regard to

the true way of creating a market for our productions, viz., by making them so superior in quality that the demand for them will grow with the knowledge of their merits. But can any or all of those figures console the country for the loss of so many thousands of her most valuable citizens? Do any or all of them prove that to fetter trade is the way to bring about healthy expansion of trade? May not they rather suggest the question, if the resources of our country are so varied and ample that such progress in certain directions can be made in spite of her own and her neighbours' hostile tariffs, of what growth might she not be capable had her commerce been unshackled during all these years? We have already pointed out the fact that this progress has, to a very large extent, been made possible, not by Canadian protectionism, but by British free-trade. Let us add that it should not be forgotten that the simple fact of so much increase in productions, and in the volume of exports and imports, is not in itself a safe gauge of prosperity. Other questions are in order. Has the trade been fairly profitable? Have the profits been equitably distributed between those whose industry has created them? Has the resulting prosperity been widely distributed among, and felt by all classes of citizens, or have the few been enabled to appropriate the lion's share of the benefits?

But passing by these and similar enquiries which suggest themselves, or rather, which are suggested by the necessity of reconciling the fact of such increase with other facts apparently inconsistent with it, to which we have referred, our attention is arrested by that portion of Mr. Foster's argument in which he dilates eloquently upon the blessedness of a country which rejoices in the possession of the trinity of industries, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. Here he suggests a glowing picture of what Great Britain might be if she had the agricultural basis which the Dominion of Canada has to-day. Now we are not going to question the truism that from the point of view of independence of other peoples, it is a boon to a nation to possess all these varied resources within its borders. It is unquestionably the fact that the United States possesses all three in so large measure which has made it possible for the Republic to attain to such wonderful prosperity in spite of the short-sighted and exclusive trade policy from which it seems to be now about to shake itself free. But does it not occur to Mr. Foster to ask whether Great Britain could have by any possibility attained to her present commercial supremacy, a supremacy which seems to carry with it to a large extent all other forms of supremacy, had she possessed those immense agricultural resources? What but the very necessity under which her people lie, of procuring the greater part of their food from foreign countries, has stimulated that spirit of daring commercial enterprise which has carried the British flag to the ends of the earth? We need not enlarge. It is evident that the ideal which our Finance Minister seems to have set before him of a nation self-contained, and in-