

ON the main question, which is one of fact, between the debaters, we cannot but think that the Opposition leaders had the best of the argument. Mr. Foster's contention that Canadians are content and have reason to be content with their present condition, is one which it seems impossible to maintain. "Nobody doubted," he said, "that the Dominion had made great progress and had wonderfully developed." But he denied, in effect, that because of this progress there was now a demand for a new departure in order to maintain it. "Where," he asked, "is the practical grievance this wide Dominion through?" The grievance, or at least one grievance, is that the process of development is arrested, or very seriously checked. The census returns prove that all too clearly. The constant stream of emigration of the young men of the land—those who should be its bone and sinew and the chief factors in its development—which is going on day by day before the eyes of all, proves it beyond controversy. Can a young people who possess any national ambition or worthy patriotism be content with such a state of affairs? No doubt there are a good many of our people, those who happen to be in good positions in connection with some one or other of our much protected industries, who are contented with the present state of things. Many of them may be personally better off than they would be if there were more people and more development in the country, for these might mean more competition and less monopoly. Commercially, then, the country has a grievance. Whether it is one that is capable of being remedied under existing circumstances by any cure which would not prove worse than the disease, we do not now undertake to say. If there is no possibility of finding such remedy the outlook for our country's future development is indeed dark. But this cessation of growth is but one of the grievances of which the people of Canada have to complain. The inferiority of the colonial citizenship, of which Mr. Laurier spoke, is another. The Canadian at his best is but a "colonist" still, in the eyes of the Englishman, and of the world. A quarter-century of confederation has done little to remove this stigma of inferiority. The Englishman or Scotchman living in Canada does not perhaps feel it to any great extent. He is an Englishman or a Scotchman still. But the native Canadian often feels it sorely. He has no distinct nationality, no country of his own which is known to the outside world and of which he can be proud when abroad. Canada is but an appendage of the Mother State, and the native Canadian must familiarize himself with the idea that his nationality, if he claims one, is of a somewhat nondescript type. Hence it is perhaps little to be wondered at, after all, that it is found so difficult to evoke a strong and healthy Canadian sentiment. Under these circumstances it may well be asked whether it is not time for the Canadian Government to commit itself to some policy looking to a fuller citizenship for the native of Canada. It should at least indicate the direction in which this aspiration after a distinctive national life may hereafter find its goal. Are our leaders looking forward to Imperial Federation? If so, the sooner they begin to show when and how a movement of this kind is to be brought within the sphere of the possible and the practicable, and in what way it is to meet the want which is becoming year by year more deeply felt, and which has probably more to do with the voluntary expatriation of so many young Canadians than we are accustomed to think, the better. But all this is by the way. Meanwhile, to return for a moment to the point from which we set out; why, we should like to ask, is it necessary that a Canadian commercial treaty should be negotiated through the British Government? Is it answered: "Because we should have to rely upon the Mother Country for its enforcement"? But nobody expects to enforce a commercial treaty *vi et armis*. And, be it remembered, it is but commercial treaties which are now under consideration. Were the question one of any other kind of treaty, *e.g.*, a treaty of alliance for some purpose of offence or defence, it would be easy to see why it must be drawn up under the direction and fortified with the sanction of the British Government. But a treaty for mutual trade requires no such sanction. Why should not Canada, then, be empowered to make the best trade arrangements possible with other nations on her own responsibility. Cannot her loyalty be trusted? We believe that the best of all trade arrangements is no treaty at all, but perfect freedom for everyone to buy and sell to the best advantage. But the time for that is not yet come.

PREJUDICE dies hard, even in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Witness the attitude taken by some legal lights in the Ontario Assembly the other day, on the debate on Mr. Balfour's Bill to confer on the Law Society power to admit women to the study of law. What possible reason can there be why women should not be permitted to study law if they wish to do so? Is not jurisprudence one of the noblest, the most profound, the most broadening and elevating of all studies in which the human mind can engage? By what right, human or divine, should the masculine moiety of our citizens take it upon themselves to say that they must have a monopoly of the study of this ennobling science? The men, pure-minded, far-sighted creatures that they are, are afraid, forsooth, that if women are permitted to get a knowledge of law, they may wish to enter the courts to practise it, and in the course of their practice may some day come in contact with something so pitchy as to be fit to be handled only by their compeers of the other sex. Is not such an argument as this a little too late in the day? Has it not now been pretty well demonstrated that women may be safely left to follow the dictates of their own innate and cultured sense of propriety, and that they are quite as well qualified to judge what is modest and becoming for them as are the average of their mentors of the other sex? Is it not, indeed, just possible if that the presence of ladies at the Bar should have the effect occasionally of modifying the character of the cross-examinations in certain classes of criminal cases, and of preventing the putting of unnecessary and outrageous questions, neither justice nor modesty would suffer from the change? But the question is not whether it is desirable that women should practise as barristers in all kinds of cases. It is whether they shall be permitted to share educational advantages which are furnished at the public expense, and to which women therefore contribute their share of taxation. It is also whether women can be trusted to govern themselves in accordance with their own sense of propriety, or whether it is necessary that they should be restricted and hampered at every turn by limitations prescribed by the sex which has hitherto had a monopoly of the law-making business, and which is only just learning at this late day to use that monopoly with anything like a just and reasonable consideration for the rights of the other sex. We certainly are not particularly anxious to see women advocates in the civil and criminal courts, but we are anxious that women should be at liberty to follow this or any other honourable business or profession, if they choose to do so and can find a demand for their services. We confess that we have never before given much thought to this particular phase of the question of woman's sphere, as it has never before, we believe, been made a living question in Canada. May we be pardoned if we add that the weakness of the objections raised against Mr. Balfour's Bill, even more than the cogency of the reasoning in its support, have convinced us of the essential justice of the measure. When able opponents of a given proposal are forced to resort to such reasoning as was used even by Mr. Meredith in the case in question, it seems pretty safe to conclude that they have somehow got on the wrong side.

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

THE office of a Minister of the Crown is not a sinecure; and allowing that his duties are conscientiously performed, the country has no reason to complain that his salary is excessive. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Minister luxuriates while his deputy works. Those spectators who have the necessary patience to listen to the wearying, and to a great extent profitless, talk over the estimates, cannot fail to be struck by the demands which are made upon the gentlemen on the Treasury Benches for information on the most minute matters of detail connected with these departments. An amusing illustration of this occurred when we had the dignified Minister of Justice, who is thoroughly at home in treating of the weightiest matters connected with the State, defending various expenses connected with his department. Mr. McMullen, always on the *qui vive* for any unjustifiable expenditure, questioned the Minister as to certain contracts for supplies for penitentiaries. The Public Accounts contain such minute and detailed information that one has only to look at the proper page to find out how much the country pays for a bushel of potatoes, how much is given for a bushel of oats, and if an extra lemon be purchased it will be found duly recorded. Now, everyone agrees that a Minister of a Department should be thoroughly acquainted with the working of that branch of the Public Service over which he exercises control, but it can scarcely, in justice, be demanded that a man like Sir John Thompson who, without any great experience (for after

all his experience as a leader is not extended), should be expected to know just what is the price of potatoes in the market upon the occasion that a tender is accepted for the supplying of groceries for a prison or penitentiary. Nevertheless, although it was a pretty daring thing to do, the worthy Minister of Justice met Mr. McMullen on his own ground and talked over questions of groceries as if he had been in the habit of handling them all his life. Truly the life of a Minister of the Crown while the House is in supply is not an enviable one.

The Opposition is not showing any sign of a lack of desire to go into questions in which lengthy debating powers are demanded, and there are one or two of the leading members to Mr. Speaker's left, who at least give us the idea that they are not alarmed to hear themselves talk. But, it is quite presumable that what they have to say is well worth hearing. The question of an investigation into the doings of Sir Adolphe Caron in connection with the building of the Lake St. John Railway, is now on the *tapis*, and has already led to an exceedingly acrimonious debate, which at the time of writing is not concluded. Nor are we at all sure how it will result. Of this there may be a word more to say when the debate has been further continued. At the present stage, Sir Richard Cartwright is "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against" the Government, and he has his knife thoroughly sharpened and ready for the gay Knight of Quebec.

The Opposition have also taken a stand upon a matter of wider moment than the political morality of any single member of the Government. They are making an advance along the line of political independence. This can no longer be denied, nor should it be.

There is no reason in the world why any member of Parliament should fear to express his opinions regarding the future of this country. In the Motherland there are those who are not afraid to say that, it is the near destiny of Great Britain to become a republic. It must be remembered that when the doctrine of the Divine right of things became absolute, as it has become, except in the formulary of the State Church, and when in its stead arose the doctrine of the supreme right of the people, the will of the people at any stage of the political history of a country became regarded as paramount. Therefore, if we concede that any particular change in our constitution means more happiness for the people living in our land, we are bound to advocate a measure of that kind. But the Conservative, in Canada or at home, has always this in his argument. Measures which seem to be fraught with good for the country may turn out to have an entirely opposite effect. It is something worth considering that we stand on solid ground at present, and that any movement we may make, whether it takes us in the way of political independence or of annexation, is not without the danger that it may deprive us of our present solid footing.

Mr. Mills moved on a motion to go into supply that all the words after the word "that" be left out, and the following inserted in the stead thereof: "It is expedient to obtain the necessary powers to enable Her Majesty the Queen, through her representative, the Governor-General of Canada, upon the advice of his Ministers, to appoint an agent to negotiate commercial treaties with other British possessions or with foreign States subject to the prior consent or subsequent approval of the Parliament in Canada." Upon this amendment he based a long resolution to the effect that it was in the interests of Canada that she should be more directly concerned than at present with the forming of commercial treaties with foreign countries in which she is more seriously affected than any other part of the Empire. Mr. Foster, who is also of a philosophical stamp of mind, and has had a training in political economy scarcely less than the member for Bothwell, was put forward by the Government to reply to this proposal. His principal point was that there had been no demand from any of the leading commercial bodies of the country for the change as suggested by Mr. Mills, and that until there was such a demand it did not come within the range of practical questions. T. C. L. K.

#### 1492 AND 1892; OR, 1000 AND 1900—WHICH?

WITH 1892 we have reached the fourth centennial year of the discovery of America by Columbus. And so the question is brought into greater prominence whether Columbus really did discover, or merely rediscovered the Western Continent. Was not Leif Erikson the true discoverer of America? A second question is, if he was the real discoverer, what land did he first see and touch at, and where did he afterward disembark? There are three sources of information in answering these questions—history, antiquities and mythology.

The historical evidence is found in one of the Icelandic sagas, which some people would seem to reject as strict historical fact, though there is no apparent reason for doing so. It bears on the face of it the stamp of truth: it is plainly very different from the most of the sagas, which deal with the national religion and describe the deeds of the Norse gods. But that Leif is a human being who has seen the Occident is assured, for his description of the land he discovers coincides in the main with that of the eastern coast of North America.

In 982, according to the saga, Eric the Red discovered Greenland, and founded a colony there. In 985 Bjarni, a sea rover, on a voyage between Iceland and Greenland was blown by a north-east gale out of his course far south,