

FREE GRANTS IN ONTARIO.

WE rejoice to learn that there are reasons to believe the Free Grant system commenced in Ontario will prove successful. Several townships were set aside at the meeting of the Legislature in Toronto last fall to be given to actual settlers as Free Grants. These were mainly in what is known as the Muskoka district, and embraced the new Townships of McDougall, Foley, Humphrey, Cardwell, Watt, Stephenson, Brunel, McLean, Draper, and others. These townships contain a good deal of excellent farming lands, and we are happy to learn considerable progress has already been made in their settlement. We are informed that very close upon 15,000 acres of the Free Grants have been already taken up by actual settlers, nearly all of whom are persons who have not previously received such grants from the Crown. The number of persons located is 137, and of these only some 26 had previously had Free Grants. Besides the number of acres actually taken up, applications have been made for some 7,650 acres more, and as soon as the affidavits are made by the applicants according to law, the land will be allotted, counting in the reservations made by the Crown Land agents at the instance of the Local Government, at least 25,000 acres of these wild lands have been up for actual settlement. This must certainly be regarded as a very favourable start for the Free Grant system. It is probably not over three or four months since these townships began to be taken up, as parties could hardly go up to the territory with a view to select a good farm until some time in April, when the snow would be off the ground. Many have also been deterred from settling on these Muskoka lands because they did not wish to be pioneers, and would rather wait until the settlements had been begun. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that next spring will witness a still stronger desire among many of the young men and others of Canada, to possess themselves of a hundred acres of land, which can now be had for five years' settlement and the clearance of some fifteen acres. These terms are so easy that they must speedily attract population to the Muskoka district, and develop and open up that large tract of country bordering on the Georgian Bay. Many families eking out a mere subsistence in cities, would do well to turn their attention to these Free Grants. Whilst we do not say all the land is fit for agricultural purposes, there is a great deal of good land in the Muskoka district, and upon such places a few years' work would place many families in a position of competency, who now have hard work to make both ends meet. We hope to see this movement in Ontario entirely successful, and that the Free Grant system may be extended to all parts of the Dominion. Free lands and the commencement of the Intercolonial Railway and other public works, ought rapidly to augment our population during the next five or six years.

THE RECENT CRISIS AT HALIFAX.

THE cause of the Union appears more hopeful. We say this in view of recent events in Nova Scotia. In all parts of the Dominion the return of the Hon. Mr. Howe and the other Anti-Union Delegates, and the meeting of the Local Legislatures, were regarded as the crisis of the Repeal movement. This crisis may be said to have passed, and it has, we think left the prospects of the Dominion brighter than they have been for some months.

The capital of Nova Scotia—the City of Halifax—has been quite a centre of attraction during the past three weeks. The meeting of the Provincial Legislature, the Convention of the Anti-Union members of both Houses, and the arrival on the scene of Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George Cartier, Hon. Wm. McDougall, Hon. Mr. Mitchell and other influential gentlemen from a distance, rendered the occasion one of much importance, particularly when it is remembered that the fate of British American Union hung in the balance. Telegrams to the daily press from Halifax have lengthened out greatly of late, as the people in the West have been anxious to get the news as to what steps the Repealers proposed to take under the peculiar circumstances in which they now find themselves placed. We have often heard of "Looking to Washington," but of late we have been "Looking to Halifax," and we trust we may long continue to look to it as the chief seaport of the Dominion.

We think the majority of the Anti-Unionists of Nova Scotia deserve credit for the moderate course which their recent Convention took. It is well known

that some violent Repealers were prepared to take extreme measures. A few were ready to answer the decision of the British House of Commons and the Duke of Buckingham, by refusing to pay duties, or in some other illegal way setting the Dominion Government at defiance. This action would simply have been rebellion! Its consequences might have been very serious indeed. To the credit of the Hon. Joseph Howe be it said, he seems to have steadfastly set his face against any display of Disloyalty, and it would appear that to him and some of the Dominion members, the country is indebted for the adoption of a more moderate policy. That policy is still to seek the Repeal of the Union, but it is to be done by constitutional means, which is the only course any statesmen not an Annexationist at heart, could for an instant support. In the resolutions adopted by the joint Convention which met at Halifax, we recognize the action of men still loyal to the British Crown, and notwithstanding their present feelings against the Union, we feel assured a little experience will so disappoint their fears and benefit Nova Scotia, that they will yet become as proud of the Union as any other portion of its inhabitants.

The Premier and his colleagues have done well in visiting Halifax and other places in the Maritime Provinces. Such a visit might have taken place with advantage before the present time, and might have prevented some misapprehensions in Nova Scotia, for we take it these gentlemen would take occasion to show the leading citizens whom they met, that it was certainly preposterous to suppose we would reap any advantage from Confederation which their Provinces would not fully share. During their trip, we hope they did not hesitate to tell the Nova Scotians, that nothing could be more alien to the feelings of our people than to attempt to keep them in the Union by force; that, whilst we insist on the Union, now that it has been consummated—having a fair trial before it is condemned, yet if after that trial has been given, they still insist that it is against the interests of Nova Scotia, very few, indeed, would raise their voices either against repeal or remedying the grievances complained of.

There are many in Nova Scotia, who profess to believe that Confederation is popular in the late Province of Canada, because it will benefit the latter at their expense. Never was there a more incorrect or unjust idea. We have never met a single public man who did not believe that in a mere dollars and cents point of view Ontario would lose more than she would gain by being united to the Maritime Provinces. The Hon. Mr. Tilley has shown that such is already the fact with New Brunswick, and we doubt not the state of the account with Nova Scotia would, if examined, prove the same thing. The reason—and the only reason—why Confederation is so popular among us is, that it affords the only hope of our preserving a separate Political Existence, and building up a new British American Nation on the northern part of this Continent.

The decision arrived at in Halifax—to seek repeal only by Constitutional means—we regard as the turning point of the Repeal movement. As England has decided that Constitutional means will not avail until some real objections can be adduced, the decision of the Anti-Union party is tantamount to agreeing to give Confederation a trial. We cannot but regard this as a most hopeful circumstance. We have faith in the Union. We believe a few years will prove it to be as much in the interests of Nova Scotia—if not more—than any other Province. To give it a trial, then, is (in our opinion) to render the Union of British America indissoluble, and we earnestly hope that result may flow from the moderate policy adopted at Halifax. If such turn out to be the case, Mr. Howe and his friends will in after years have reason to feel proud that they averted the recent Convention in favour of moderation and peace.

DANGEROUS EPIDEMIC.

GRAND alarm has been produced throughout the Western States by the appearance of a most fatal disease among cattle. Hundreds of animals have been carried off at different places by this dangerous epidemic, the nature of which has not yet been certainly ascertained. A Professor Gamgee pronounces it to be one of a group of inflammatory fevers, known in England as Anthrax fever, and elsewhere as Black Water, and its effect upon cattle is speedily evidenced by a "drooping head, arched back, hollow flank, 'glarry' coat, laboured respiration, running

at the nose and eyes, dark-coloured urine, and frequently bloody discharges." It appears to be quite as fatal as *Rinderpest*, very few cattle ever recovering from the attack.

From investigations which have taken place, it is certain that the disease was introduced into Illinois and other Western States by Texas and Cherokee cattle. It has been clearly traced to these animals, and steps have been taken at several principal Western Railway points to prevent any more of these cattle being sent eastwards. It appears that about 1,200 Texas cattle came up the Mississippi River about the last week of April, and it was not till about the 1st of June that any deaths occurred. Very soon after this date, however, cattle began to die in considerable numbers all along the route which the Texas cattle had passed—at East, wherever they remained any length of time, the disease has made its appearance in a milder or less severity. Quite a large number of cattle have been killed at Pittsburg, New York, Chicago, Tolono and other points, in order to prevent the disease from spreading. It is sincerely to be hoped these prompt measures will attain the desired end, and that this continent will be spared the heavy loss which Great Britain suffered from *Rinderpest* a few years ago.

The Canada Gazette of Saturday contains a proclamation prohibiting the importation of American cattle into Canada in the meantime. This is a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of the "Black Water" into this country. This course may be necessary, and it is probably well, in an important matter of this kind, to err on the safe side; but we do not see by the Western press that the disease has extended to places where no Texas cattle have been, and the most prompt and efficient means have been taken by the American cities most directly interested, to prevent the shipment eastwards of any infected cattle. We are inclined to think the chief danger is already past, and we trust it will not be long until the Government will consider itself justified in withdrawing the restrictive order, as the cattle trade between the two countries is already greatly hampered by the laws in force.

OTTAWA AND LAKE HURON NAVIGATION.

WE have received a pamphlet, entitled, "The Interests of the British Empire in North America." It was compiled by a committee appointed at a meeting of several members of the Canadian Parliament, held in Ottawa last May, as a prospectus of the objects which the committee have in view. These objects are the opening up of the great natural highways through British American territory from Montreal to the Pacific, via the Ottawa and tributaries, the great lakes, the Saskatchewan, &c. More especially, the pamphlet before us points out the importance and advantage of so improving the natural water-courses of the Ottawa and the Matawan, and opening the communication between them and Lake Nipissing, as to allow of the passage from the great lakes of vessels of 1,000 tons burden to Montreal or to sea. The comparison of distances shows very greatly in favour of this route, as against either the St. Lawrence or Erie Canal routes. From Chicago to Liverpool by the projected Ottawa River route, the distance is 3,663 miles, by the St. Lawrence 4,081 miles, and by the New York 4,491 miles. The saving of distance is a saving of time, and consequently a saving of cost of transportation, and the saving of time will be even more in proportion as the total length of canals to be passed would be greatly less than by the other routes. It is estimated that the cost of a ton of freight from Chicago to Liverpool by the Ottawa, St. Lawrence, and New York routes would be respectively \$20.00, \$21.83, and \$26.27, and that, taking the maximum time of open water as two hundred and twenty days, the number of trips a vessel could take between Chicago and New York during the season would be eight, from Chicago to Montreal by the St. Lawrence would be thirteen, while by the Ottawa, nineteen trips could be made.

We agree with the writer of this pamphlet in this estimate of the importance, both commercially and from a military point of view, of opening up a new route through sparsely settled country at a distance from our southern frontier. The weakest point in the geographical position of the Dominion is acknowledged to lie in its great length from east to west contrasted with its narrowness from north to south; and it needs no wonderful amount of intelligence to perceive that nothing will ever develop and settle up the interior of the country unless means of communication