

of yourself. You've already said the passwords loud enough for any lurker to hear, so that we'll have to change them as because o' your stupefiedness. Be serious and keep your eyes and gun for strange folk, men or women."

Tryphosa fled into the house, whither Tryphena—who, falling into the same error, had crossed the beat of Timothy—had already betaken herself, being driven off the field by the more sensible and merciful younger Pilgrim. When the Squire had completed his rounds, he returned to the guard-room, and, telling the story of Sylvanus' folly, which roused the Captain's ire, showed the necessity for new watchwords and better instruction of sentries.

"It maun be something the lads and all the rest o' us ken weel, Squire. What think ye o' Cricket and Golf?" asked Mr. Errol.

"I am afraid that Ben Toner might not know these words," put in the dominie.

"What?" cried Mr. Perrowne, "do you really mean to say that this—ah—Towner needs to be towled what cricket is?"

"I fear so," Wilkinson answered; with the effect that no heathen could have fallen lower in the parson's estimation than did Ben.

"I say good, ship-shape words are Starbud and Port," growled the Captain.

"In Sout Ameriky it was Constitution and Libertad," suggested Mr. Terry.

"Pork and Beans 'll no' do; nor Burdock and Blood Bitters; nor Powder and Shot," said the Squire, ruminating; "for the one ca's up the tither ower nayteral like. What say ye, Maister Wilkinson?"

Wilkinson was taken aback by the suddenness of the question, and blurted out what had been only too much in his thoughts: "Idiot and Boy."

"Capital!" "Well said!" "The very thing!" "Jest suits Sylvanus!" the various voices responded; and the Squire went out to the sentries to make the desired change. The lawyer chuckled when he received the new words, and all the other sentinels repeated to themselves the poetic terms "Eejut and Boy."

It was just on the stroke of midnight, time to relieve the guards, when the distant sound of pistol shots in rapid succession fell simultaneously on the ears of Coristine, Ben and Sylvanus. The lawyer, stepping hastily to the house, called out the armed inmates, and in another minute or so Nash came galloping up. "Stay where you are, Squire, with your sentries; and, you other men, look to your loading and come on with me. I've been fired at by a waggon load of them." The five unposted men hastened out into the road and away after the detective to the left. After going a short distance, the adjutant called a halt, and told the veteran to advance in military order. "Now, min," said Mr. Terry quietly, "extind about tin paces from aich another to the lift, an' Oi'll be the lifthand man. Thin kape wan eye on me an' the other before yeez, and advance whin Oi advance undher cover as the stumps and finces and things. Riddy now—extind!" The movement was well executed, and, as the veteran was eager for the fray, he led them more rapidly than it could be thought the old man had the power to run, until they reached the spot where the waggon had halted. It was gone, without a sign; so the gallant skirmishers re-formed in the road and marched back to quarters. When they arrived at the gate, Coristine could not resist the temptation of a challenge, unnecessary as it was. The dominie was leading, and him he hailed: "Who goes there?" With momentary hesitation, Wilkinson answered in the same undertone:—

"Friends."

"The word, friends?"

"Idiot."

"The countersign, Idiot?"

"Boy."

"Pass, Idiot Boy, and all's well!"

(To be continued.)

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

I AM going to offer, through the columns of THE WEEK, some observations on the political situation in Canada. No apology need be necessary for this. The affairs of a nation are always worthy of reflection, and just now it seems to me there is especial need of frank statements. As I am not in any way associated with Dominion politics, except as an elector, nothing I can say will have any further significance than the opinion of an individual.

The result of the last general election was a close call. The Government was sustained by a narrow majority—about twenty-four, I think, would be a fair statement of the actual majority in the Commons that could be relied upon by the Government. That election I cannot but regard as a violation of sound principles and savouring of party trickery of a most unfair and objectionable character. To suddenly spring an election without reason just on the brink of a census, and when the electoral lists were two years old, and full of names which had ceased to have a qualification, and without the names of multitudes who were qualified, can only be characterized as an outrage. No popular verdict can change the moral aspects of an action like this. No question is settled until it is settled rightly, and ethical laws are immutable and cannot be changed, nor their violation condoned by any popular verdict whatever. The cold, impartial judgment of history will be that this sudden dissolution was dictated by chicane and wholly without justification.

The elections were safely over, however, and the Government had a working majority. To secure this they had the benefit of the enormous prestige of Sir John A. Macdonald; the advantages of superior organization, larger means and exercise of the vast patronage of the Ministry. The result showed that public opinion was very dubious in regard to the maintenance of this Government in power. Spite of the loyalty cry, all too effective, but really absurd, they came through with a very small plurality in the popular vote. In eleven constituencies the Government majority was under fifty, namely: Bagot, 43; Brome, 3; North Bruce, 30; East Grey, 19; L. Islet, 6; North Middlesex, 6; East Peterboro', 28; Prince Edward, 21; Shelburne, 19; South Victoria, 25; South Wentworth, 1. Total 201. A change of 102 votes would have destroyed the Government and made the parties even in the Commons.

Very soon after the elections, Parliament was assembled. Disaster began, then, to dog the heels of the Ministry day after day. First and greatest came the death of Sir John Macdonald, the leader and commanding figure of the Conservative Party. With his death came the terrible revelations in connection with the Department of Public Works, which certainly shocked the country for a time. At the same time irregularities of a very grave character were discovered in connection with the Department of the Interior; the Printing Bureau, which did not leave the Minister, Mr. Chapleau, altogether unscathed, and the Post Office Department, which set afloat ugly rumours respecting the Post Master General. The Oochrane investigation revealed a condition of affairs in one constituency which could not fail to disgust every man who had any sense of honour or any regard for ordinary decency in public life. The next great blow was the census returns, which were, indeed, astounding. They showed that the older Provinces of the Dominion had made little progress during the past ten years, and that little was in cities and towns. The Maritime Provinces had made no increase at all, and nearly half of the finest counties of Ontario had actually retrograded. The great county of Pictou, N.S., with its large coal industry and its iron and steel works, its glass works, foundries and other industries had actually retrograded to the extent of a thousand.

Here was the first crucial test of the value of the National Policy as means of national progress and prosperity. Before its operation all sections of Canada increased at the rate of from fifteen to twenty per cent. every ten years. Now the average rate was about eight per cent., except in the new Provinces of the North-West, where growth is entirely exceptional. The returns were conclusive so far as the agricultural industry is concerned. It meant that the farmers were not developing, and the country generally not making satisfactory progress. It meant also that large numbers of our people had left and were leaving the country. This has always been to a certain extent the case, since it is the fortune of Canada to be situated beside a country having unusual and enormous attractions, industrially and otherwise; but the avowed aim of the National Policy was to check this, and keep Canadians at home. It was a remarkable revelation that during the past ten years the exodus had been greater than ever. Between 1851 and 1861 the United States had been relatively as attractive as now, and yet the population of Nova Scotia increased in those ten years twenty per cent. Between 1861 and 1871, under similar conditions in respect of the United States, the growth of that Province was seventeen per cent. Between 1871 and 1881 there was still an increase greater than the natural increase of the Province about fourteen per cent. But between 1881 and 1891 the increase was only two per cent., while the natural increase of births over deaths must have been more than six times as great. As a consequence it is manifest that over 50,000 people left Nova Scotia during the past ten years for the United States—for practically all who leave go there. The Maritime Provinces as a whole fared even worse. New Brunswick made no increase at all, and P. E. Island actually retrograded, though it is one of the most productive sections of the world, and with a people unsurpassed in enterprise, industry and thrift.

Such a condition of things tells its own tale. It must be met; it is useless to attempt to explain it away. One can talk of additional bank deposits, but this means nothing. In many sections of Canada banks have only recently been introduced. The establishment of bank agencies in small towns and villages everywhere is a recent invention. Before that, thrifty persons kept their money locked up in their trunks, and when a person wished to farm he went to some prosperous person for a loan. Now all accumulations are put into the bank and all loans made through the bank; but it does not follow that any more money is in the country, because the bank deposits have increased. The most absolute test of success in any country is numbers. The increase of the population is conclusive proof of prosperity; the falling off of population is final evidence of deadened misrule. This rule of course applies to young and growing countries. It may, indeed, happen that in an old country like England, France or Belgium, population may be stationary, or even fall off, because of overcrowding. No such condition exists in any section of Canada. But it is a remarkable circumstance that in England, where population is very dense, and where emigration has been steady for many generations, the population for the past ten years actually increased more than that of the five older Provinces of Canada. We have an enormous terri-

tory inviting settlers; England's land is nearly all taken up; Canada has spent hundreds of thousands on immigration; England has rather encouraged emigration. Canada is a scattered country, offering land free; England is a densely populated country, with every foot of land at a high price, and cities and large towns everywhere. Yet it is actually the fact that England increased more in population during the past ten years than the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island. Not only more, but at a greater ratio—a larger percentage.

No one, therefore, can seriously argue that the result of the census was not a knock-down blow to the policy of restriction in Canada. You may write books, make speeches, carry constituencies, and shout in triumph, but that will not avail to save the National Policy. It is a failure. The census settled the matter, and put it out of the range of serious debate. It is quite true that a majority of the electors of Canada might be induced by various means to vote to-morrow that it was a great success. But I do not hesitate to hold that this would count for nothing. The voice of the people may be the voice of God, but the first voice isn't, at all times, by any means. The ultimate voice of the people is, and we have not heard that yet, and neither the philosopher nor the historian are greatly concerned as to whether this comes sooner or later.

I do not covet the title of pessimist, but I am ready to bear it with all the consequences if truth is involved in it; and I am therefore free to say that several great evils and dangers surround Canada at this moment, and one of them seems to call for observation at this point. Moral cowardice is essentially characteristic of the Canadian people at the present time. The tendency of the hour here is to worship success, regardless of the meaning by which it is attained. In the minds of most persons it is enough that a party leader wins an election. It is considered visionary to state a principle, and pronounce it unmistakable. If one goes beyond figuring what will answer to carry an election this year he is going out of the range of "practical politics." The issue in a constituency at an election may be "Is the National Policy serving the best interests of the country?" If this issue could be voted upon by intelligent men, free from prejudice, and after full and honest discussion, the judgment at the polls might weigh much. But, if one of the powerful concomitants in the election is an imprudent promise of a railway through a part of the constituency, in the event of the Government candidate being elected, and another, a gang of heelers distributing money in vast sums to debauch the poorer and less principled of the electors, I decline to recognize the voice of God in the verdict. Practical politics we must have, and moonshine is always valueless in political contests, but it is true, nevertheless, that moral laws exist and economic laws prevail, and that none of these can be set aside by any means whatever without the inevitable consequences. Let us, then, not be bound down to the wheels of temporary success. Let us have the courage to think and the manliness to avow our convictions, whether the ballot-boxes of to-day endorse our views or not.

The result of the session of Parliament—a long and memorable one—ought to have been the destruction of the present Government. Their fiscal policy stood discredited by the incontrovertible logic of statistics; the abominable system of corruption, which every intelligent person in Canada has known as a moral certainty to have been the basic principle upon which Sir John A. Macdonald maintained power, was at last made tangible and exposed to public view by evidence the most clear and conclusive. The whole country was shocked. The independent press, with one voice, cried out against it; and at last the pulpit began to thunder, which was an encouraging token that public opinion was not utterly dead. The voice of the civilized world was heard in condemnation, and any person reasoning from general principles would have been certain that the bye-elections would have settled the fate of the Government. The event showed that they did, but in a way little expected by good men. They not only retained their own seats, but they went forward for two or three weeks sweeping constituencies which were naturally Liberal, so that instead of a majority of twenty-four they are now able to boast of a majority of sixty.

There must have been a cause of several causes for this extraordinary result, but these must be discussed in another article.

J. W. LONGLEY.

Halifax, June, 1892.

PARIS LETTER.

PHYSICAL education in France is progressing by leaps and bounds—naturally. The *Petit Journal* takes the lead in this necessary amelioration of the national character; it gives prizes from its own well-filled treasury, and accepts and distributes those contributed by individuals sympathetic with the movement. A walking match from Paris to Belfort is the latest contest organized, and is now being executed, and some thousands of citizens escorted the competitors outside of the city. Of the 1,136 Richmonds who entered the field, but 880 actually started for the 43 prizes. The distance from Paris to Belfort is 267 miles, and the winners are declared in the order of their arrival. The race is open to "all comers," provided they be French. Each competitor is measured and weighed, given a certificate which displays at the same time his photo. At fixed stations along the route controllers mark on the certificate the hour of the owner's arrival.