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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

WE have, in another paragraph, expressed our gratification that it has been resolved to call a convention of the Liberals of Ontario, and have pointed out some of the considerations which seem to us, viewing the situation from an independent standpoint, to make the holding of such a convention desirable and wise. Since that paragraph was written we have read Mr. E. W. Thomson's letter which appeared in Monday's *World*, after having been refused insertion in the *Globe*. This letter has attracted considerable attention by reason of the well-known ability of the writer and the fact that from the days of George Brown until a few months ago he occupied, save for two or three years, an important position on the *Globe* staff, and still avows himself an ardent Liberal and an advocate of unrestricted reciprocity. On analysis, Mr. Thomson's letter is found to consist of two distinct though related parts. The first is a severely sarcastic attack upon the following argument, quoted from the *Globe's* report of a recent address by Mr. Charlton:—

He would show them that direct taxation was not necessary. The revenue for 1889 was \$30,612,000, and, deducting from that the sum collected from American importations, \$7,371,000, there would be left a balance of \$23,241,000. But there was that year a balance of \$1,865,000. That would have to be taken into account, and thus you have a balance of revenue of \$25,106,000.

Mr. Thomson attempts to show the fallacy of this reasoning by various illustrations, such as that by the same method the man who has an income of \$600 a year, and has a surplus of \$100 at the end of the year, "may rejoice that he had, without suspecting it, \$700 revenue." Mr. Charlton may, no doubt, be left to take care of himself. But as we wish in this as in other cases to see for ourselves, so far as we can, just how much there is in such an argument on an important matter, without regard to its party bearing, we may suggest the question whether the fallacy is not, after all, in the form of the reasoning rather than in the thing itself. Mr. Charlton's avowed aim was to show that with unrestricted reciprocity a revenue sufficient for our needs could be raised without direct taxation. In substance he says, if we understand him, "A penny saved is as good as a penny gained." If the balance of revenue for a given year, after deducting the amount derived from United

States' importations, was \$23,241,000, and there was that year a surplus of \$1,865,000 over and above the sum needed to carry on the business of the country, it is evident that we may fairly deduct this surplus from the difference between the \$23,241,000 and the amount of actual or necessary expenditure, in order to ascertain the exact sum which will be needed from other sources to make up the deficiency caused by unrestricted reciprocity, and to balance revenue and expenditure." With all respect to Mr. Thomson, we are unable to see why this is not a perfectly sound argument. By adopting the cross-entry system of book-keeping, Mr. Charlton swelled his revenue to a fictitious size, but the fact of adding a given sum to one side of the account instead of deducting it from the other does not, so far as we can see, in any way invalidate the conclusion.

IN the other part of his letter Mr. Thomson is, it seems to us, much more successful. Nothing can be more misleading than for the advocate of unrestricted reciprocity to assume that under that arrangement the revenue from importations, other than those from the United States, will remain undiminished. If they should do so, the very fact—if we may adapt an argument often used against Protectionists—would stamp the new arrangement as a failure. Advocates of unrestricted reciprocity should look this objection fairly in the face. They must not be permitted to ignore a consideration which suggests itself to the candid mind at the very outset, *i.e.*, "the displacement of British and other old-world goods by American goods." Mr. Thomson's question here is unanswerable, or rather can be answered only in the affirmative: "If American goods, which now compete advantageously here with European goods, could enter free of customs taxes, while British and other European goods could not enter without paying 30 or 40 per cent., would not American goods displace all others to so great an extent that other \$7,000,000, or say \$14,000,000 in all, would be lost to the Federal treasury?" The figures, of course, are but a guess, though they do not seem extravagant, but the argument is conclusive. It is not, as Mr. Thomson proceeds to show, an answer to say that the private gains of individual Canadians would amount to vastly more than the loss of revenue, for these private gains would in nowise supply the want of public revenue unless directly taxed, and this question of direct taxation is the very question at issue. There is, it is true, one possibility which may be pleaded as an offset. It may be said that, by reason of the great and speedy increase in wealth and population which would follow unrestricted reciprocity, the people would be able to expend so much more in articles of comfort and luxury procurable to better advantage abroad, that the gain in revenue from this source would more than counterbalance the loss on United States' importations, even after due allowance for displacements of ordinary English and European goods. But all such calculations deal with unknown quantities, if they are not absolutely chimerical. Meanwhile we think it is fortunate that a well-known Liberal writer has come forward at this juncture, on the eve of the Liberal Convention, to say thus boldly to the leaders of the party: Either you do believe that "Direct Taxation on a Great Scale" is a corollary of unrestricted reciprocity or you do not. If you do not believe what seems to others almost self-evident, bring forth your strong reasons and demonstrate the soundness of your views. If you do, then say so frankly and honestly, and commence at once to educate the people up to your standard, since either the demonstration or the education is most surely indispensable to the success of your cause.

THE Liberal party, or rather its leaders, have, we are told, decided to summon a great Liberal Convention to meet in Toronto during February. This is, it must be admitted, a bold movement. The event must decide whether it is, from the party point of view, a wise one. From the higher stand-point of the public and national well-being the resolve is, we think, to be commended. The best friends of the party must admit that for some years past its policy has been rather at sixes and sevens. Within the last year or two it has, indeed, been claimed by some of the more prominent leaders that their purpose

has become fixed and definite, that the eyes of all are turned to one clearly-defined goal, that of unrestricted reciprocity. Yet this platform has never, so far as we are aware, received the full and formal endorsement of all those who are entitled to speak for the party. We venture to say that it is not now by any means certain that the rank and file of those who have been accustomed to march under the Liberal banner are ready to agree that this object of desire so overshadowed all others that every other reform should be subordinated and relegated, in the meantime, to the back-ground. It is, we venture to say, equally uncertain whether the most influential men in the party to-day are ready to commit themselves to it absolutely and heartily. Mr. Mackenzie, the venerated ex-leader, has lately spoken words which have been interpreted as doubtful. If Mr. Blake has ever given in his adhesion to the new movement, and if he is prepared to give it the support of his influence and eloquence, we have no knowledge of the facts. And yet it can hardly be doubted that Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Blake are the two most influential men in the Liberal ranks to-day. Then, again, the strength of a political party is in its leader. Without a leader who commands the hearty and loyal and enthusiastic support of the entire body, success in a political contest is hardly possible. We have a very high respect for the personal character of Mr. Laurier, as well as a sincere admiration of his ability and eloquence, but we hazard nothing in saying that it is by no means certain that he stands to the whole party in the relation above described. It may be said that the decision of the active and recognized leader or leaders, those who are constituted such by the vote of the party representatives in the Commons, should be binding on all its members. This may be the case in the Conservative party. But the Conservatives have a leader without either a rival or a second as a party tactician. Moreover, the members of that party are, for some reason or other, better disciplined, or more loyal, or more subservient. If any one distinctive characteristic can be said still to mark a plane of cleavage between the rank and file of the two parties, it is that the Liberal body has less cohesion, and is more liable to be weakened by defections, or decimated by assertions of individual and independent opinion. We do not say this by way of disparagement. Many of the party will accept it as a high compliment, and we are not sure but they are right in so doing. We refer simply to the fact, for such we deem it. All these seem to us so many reasons why the representative men of the party from all parts of the Province, at least, should meet in convention, and agree, if possible, on all moot points. If we must have party politics, it is very desirable that parties should not be very unequal in point of numbers and weight. We hope to see this convention idea carried out successfully, and to be by its decisions put in a position to know what is the exact policy of the Liberal party, who are its approved leaders, and what are its prospects and hopes touching the near future.

THE address delivered by Mr. Dalton McCarthy to his constituents in North Simcoe brings again to the front some important questions which had been allowed to slip for a time into the back-ground. We have not always been able to admire either the substance or the spirit of Mr. McCarthy's speeches, or to agree in all respects with the views he from time to time so forcibly expressed in the course of the Equal Rights agitation. But we cannot but admire the manly and independent stand he has now taken before his constituents. It is devoutly to be wished that there were many more members of the Commons equally resolved to think for themselves, equally frank in stating the results of their thinking, and equally ready to lay their views before their constituents for their approval or rejection. Mr. McCarthy loves not Sir John A. Macdonald or the Tory party—he does not object to the name Tory—less, but his convictions of duty in regard to the dual language question more. That is the burden of his address. If Sir John permits the Act of the Manitoba Legislature abolishing the official use of dual languages to go into operation, he will continue to find in Mr. McCarthy a loyal supporter. If Sir John's Government disallows that Act, Mr. McCarthy will move a vote of want of confidence in Sir John and his Government, if he