

# The Colonist.

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AND THE TERRITORIES.

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## POOR ACCOMMODATIONS.

The Edmonton district has received a great many settlers this spring, most of whom have had to stop at the town for a few days before going on their lands.

Long ago the fact was pointed out that unless some steps were taken towards providing better accommodation for the new-comers, there would be trouble when they began to arrive. The accommodation particularly needed was an immigrant hall, or shed, where the people could be housed. No decisive action was taken, however, and towards the latter part of April, when the tide was at its full, the need of the sheds was fully demonstrated. Parties of settlers as they arrived were met with the comforting prospect of having to live and sleep under the blue canopy of heaven. It did not turn out quite so bad as that, however, thanks to the good people of Edmonton, who used every means in their power to make the new-comers comfortable. The railway company was also very active in looking after the welfare of the strangers. In the case of the Parry Sound people they very kindly loaned them the cars in which they had travelled, for a few days, though needing them in the worst way.

The trouble was aggravated by the want of means for locating lands. No survey stakes or mounds were to be found in most cases and there was no certainty that those which could be found were in their right places.

Altogether the settlers going into the Edmonton district have not been very well looked after as far as comfort and convenience were concerned.

## IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

We have not heard so much lately about "Imperial Federation," the scheme which when first presented to the people of our country, a short time ago, awakened such an interest. The League which was formed to promote this scheme is not idle though, as those who read the old country papers are aware. The journal of the League, *Imperial Federation*, shows in its late issues that those who are members of the League or are directly interested in these matters are not one whit less earnest and active to-day than they were when the scheme was first presented to the public, though others may not now be taking such an interest.

The May issue of the journal contains some specially interesting articles on League matters.

Our attention was attracted to a report of a meeting of the Leeds branch of the League at which Sir Lyon Plairfair, K.C.B., as president of the branch, delivered his inaugural address. His utterances were distinguished for sound common-sense, and for the clear and pithy language in which he embodied many of the problems arising out of a consideration of this federation scheme. As some of the points touched on, bear directly on the future of our own part of the great empire of which he was speaking, it is interesting to know just what the views of this authority are. Of the League itself and its objects, he says:—

"The object of the Federation Leagues, which are now so extensively formed throughout the United Kingdom and the Colonies, is to consider how we may prevent, or at least retard, the disruption of our great empire. The subject should not be treated with heroics, but with level-headed common sense. Lord Salisbury has told us that "Imperial Federation lends itself better to peroration than to argument," and this is to a certain extent true; but there are arguments which should be urged to show the dangers of inaction and the advantages of full discussion as to the best means of avoiding them. Lord Salisbury was in a better frame of mind last year, when he said, "Imperial Federation involves neither more nor less than the future of the British Empire."

The colonies of England are divided into two great classes which materially differ in their relation to the mother country. Those over which she rules with a sort of benevolent despotism, constitute one class and those which are self-governing constitute the other.

It has cost the Mother Country hundreds of millions in money to build up her colonies, but the national debt remains on her shoulders alone. The revenues of the British possessions are growing fast and already exceed those of the Mother Country, yet she has not, nor will she, ask them to share the burden of the national debt.

Of the present relation of the colonies to one another and to the Mother Country he says: "At present there is still only an aggregation of growing countries without any political connection between themselves unless when they confederate, as in the case of the Dominion of Canada. Even with the Mother Country the Colonies have only a slender political bond. They have been likened to a diamond necklace without a string. True, they are all under one sovereign; but the power of the crown in dealing with the acts of our own or Colonial Parliaments is fast passing into desuetude."

"No wonder, then, that there is a desire both on the part of the Mother Country and of the Colonies to deliberate at least upon methods of drawing together upon some basis of common interests. At present our actual connection is that described by Edmund Burke, and it would be a sufficient connection if our interests were continuous and identical. Burke thus describes it in his celebrated speech of 1775:—"My hold of the Colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron." The Colonies still look upon the Mother Country as *Magna virum Mater*, which might be translated freely as "Great Mother of a mighty race." Parents and children love each other as long as their sentiments and interests are mutual; they are apt to quarrel when these clash and become hostile."

At present India contributes about one-quarter of a million, and Australia, £126,000 to the naval expenditure of the home Government. The Australian contribution is for local defence,

and is not applicable to intercolonial communication. Thus we see that not only is the burden of protecting her own commerce with the colonies, and with foreign nations thrown on the shoulders of Britain, but also the protection of the commerce between the colonies themselves, and between the colonies and foreign nations. From these latter classes of commerce, she reaps not the slightest benefit, although they now threaten to exceed in volume her own traffic.

Reciprocal trade relations between England and the Colonies is another phase of the question which received the attention of the speaker. He thinks that the saying "trade follows the flag" should be changed to "financial confidence follows the flag." Under the Union Jack the colonies find credit for English capital as well as substantial help in emigrants educated at the cost of the Mother Country. Of this he says: "According to the Registrar-General, the money value of an adult man of twenty one years of age is £175, this being the sum expended in his education and upbringing. Adopting this figure, the Mother Country has supplied Australia in the last thirty years with adult emigrants who have cost the United Kingdom 175 millions sterling, to bring to a period of working ability."

Inseparably connected with every scheme, having for its object the banding together of the different parts of the British Empire, for purposes of mutual protection is the question of Britain's supply of food and raw materials. She is at present importing about 33 per cent of her food supply from her colonies and possessions, and the other 62 per cent from foreign countries, which represents in money value 47 millions sterling from the colonies and 94 millions sterling from abroad. Of her cereal food 76 per cent of the grain and 88 per cent of the flour come from foreign countries. On the United States and Russia she chiefly depends for wheat and food. But Russia is very unreliable, and the rapid growth of the population of the United States will soon make it necessary for them to curtail their exportation in order to meet the home demand. It is even estimated now that in ten or twenty years the entire production of the States will be required for their home consumption. Thus we see that it is a growing necessity that England find some new source of supply, and what better could she do than turn to her own dependencies and offer them her market. Canada is pre-eminently fitted to occupy the position of feeder to the Mother Country if we only had the population to produce the food. But according to Sir Lyon there is another condition necessary before Canada can hope to command the bread trade of Britain. He says: "Canada alone has potential powers of sufficient supply if she adopted the principle of commercial freedom. But a nation can only trade by barter. England would readily and preferentially purchase more food from Canada, if that Colony grew it in sufficient quantity; but as yet she only sends to us one-seventh the supply of wheat which we get from the United States. Canada has an admirable chance of rapidly increasing her population if she arranged her taxation so that a farming population could thrive. There is a strong tendency in the United States to restrict immigration, and emigrants would readily be diverted to Canada."

Commercial freedom is what is wanted to open for us an unflinching market for our grains and food products.