

effects on our public life of this way of doing things, see Mr. Edward Blake's letter to his Durham constituents after the general election of 1891, a letter one-half of which was much quoted by the Conservative press, and the other half of which was highly commended by the Liberal press. The whole letter seemed to me true as the gospel, though the style was more stilted and verbose than that of any of the Evangelists. So far as I remember, the only paper which disliked the whole letter was the Toronto Mail.

The profit of commercial freedom would be great. What would be the cost? So little that it may be put down as infinitesimal.

G. M. GRANT.

### \* \* \* National Sign-Posts.

THE great distinguishing characteristic of a statesman is foresight. It is the genius of the statesman that points out to his people the sign-posts not only of the road upon which they want to travel, but also of the byways which lead from the straight path. The key to the character and the life-work of Canada's greatest statesman is to be found in those words which have been graven upon the statues that the people whom he led have erected to his memory: "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die." It would seem to be a natural conclusion to draw that the antithesis to these words is the key to the work of those who opposed him.

The history of Canada during the past few years has been the history of a struggle against annexation with the United States. It was annexation with the United States which was the great question at issue when the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was being discussed in the House at Ottawa. It was not generally so understood at the time, but there are few thinking men now who would venture to deny that without that railway the few isolated provinces would have been swallowed up in the maw of the neighbouring Republic, and there were some even among those who opposed the construction of the railway that understood its true significance at the time.

It was well put by the Liberal member for Queen's, Prince Edward Island, who, speaking in Charlottetown in 1880, with reference to the construction of this railway, said, "This was a contract from which there was no escape politically and commercially, save one, and that is annexation with the United States."

Our leaders have not forgotten the independent effort that was made some few years ago to bring the question of annexation within the range of practical politics, the magazine articles that were written, the clubs that were formed, the pamphlets that were distributed to further this object. The advocates of annexation now no longer hold up their heads; at any rate, if they do, they hold their tongues, but the effort made at that time was a great one; the best talent was called forth, and it is well that it was so, for the lessons we have thereby learned have been more indelibly impressed upon our memory. We have learnt to read sign-posts, we have learnt to distinguish those forces which lead towards the United States. The first man to point to the sign-post that marks the road of face-to-face opposition to the National Policy, the necessary and natural sequence of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was Mr. Edward Blake, when his loyalty to his country proved stronger than his fidelity to party ties. Our readers will remember his farewell letter to the Liberal party in 1891. In that letter he says: "The tendency in Canada of unrestricted Free Trade with the United States, high duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union, and the more successful the plan, the stronger the tendency both by reason of community of interest and the intermingling of populations, the more intimate social connections, and the trade and fiscal relations amounting to dependency, which it would create with the States, and the greater isolation and divergency from Great Britain which it would produce, and also, especially through inconveniences experienced in the maintenance and apprehensions entertained as to the termination of the treaty." We might also add that unrestricted Free Trade with the United States would necessitate our tariff being settled by the Government at Washington.

"To Washington," then, is written upon the sign-post that marks the road of Commercial Union. Still more clear-

ly is it marked upon the sign-post that stands upon the road of Free Trade. Let us take what the advocates of annexation call the geographical argument. Here we are a narrow strip of country lying upon the border line of a great Republic, subject to the natural force of attraction that the greater body has to the less. Under Free Trade the manufacturer of Canada will be shut out from the market of the United States, but the manufacturer established to the south of the line will have the markets of both countries for the sale of his goods. Distance in the last few years, by the increase of travelling facilities, has been eliminated, and freight has been reduced to a minimum. So, the Canadian manufacturer, if he is not swamped by the surplus products of the Americans, under the stress of competition will be forced to move his factory across the line, in order that he may have access to the markets in both countries.

This, as a matter of fact, has been the experience of the world as a result of Free Trade. When the McKinley Bill became law the woollen manufacturers of Bradford and the tin manufacturers of South Wales came over to the United States to make arrangements to move their factories and their men to that country in order that they might have access to the markets from which they had been shut out. In the same way we have seen the woollen manufacturers of England starting branch factories in Germany.

Think for a moment what the result of this would be! Two of the most striking social phenomena of the present age both in Great Britain and the North American continent are the spread of higher education and the increase of urban population. During the ten years preceding the last census the increase of urban population in the United States was seven millions. In Canada the proportion has been about the same. The educated young man will not remain upon the land. At all cost he must find occupation in the city. It is the manufacturers that build up the cities and if they move over to the United States the young men must follow those who supply them with bread and butter. And what will the farmer do? He will have lost his sons, his home market, a large source of national revenue, everything except his mortgage, which, as Sol Smith says, "would hang on still." The average Canadian farmer is a man of sense. He would give his farm to his worst enemy and follow his sons and his daughters across the line.

Leaving the question of tariff to be used by politicians as a plaything with which they may humbug the voters, or a weapon in party warfare, all thinking men will endorse me when I say that the situation of the country at the present time may be summed up in one word, "population." If we accept as an axiom that our existence in years to come, as a nationality, separate from the United States, depends upon our growth as a people, then we may say, without contradiction, that "To Washington" is written in legible characters upon the sign-post that marks the road of higher education unaccompanied by an active immigration policy. There are more educated young men in the country than can find occupation for which they are suited. A large immigration of farmers affords a constantly increasing supply of occupation for educated men as merchants, clerks, mechanics, lawyers or doctors. But, as Sir Wm. Van Horn complains, the Government at Ottawa has dropped out of the immigration business. The grants for immigration purposes have largely diminished. Why is this? The necessity for immigration was never greater than it is now. We have millions of acres lying idle. We, the small handful of people who live in Canada, have to pay the whole burden of development and the annual expenditure necessary for management which would not be appreciably larger if the population was ten times as great. While every educated young man who lives in the country without occupation is so much of a loss, and, if he leave the country in search of something to do and prove successful, he affords a strong force of social attraction to induce others to follow in his footsteps.

The demagogues who lead the Labour party, hold the key of the situation. They cry out against immigration, because the immigrant is brought into competition with the Canadian labourer. The Government are afraid of him. The demagogue takes upon himself a mighty responsibility. There are two sides of every question. Is he right? Right or wrong, it seems to be clear that no Government could stand at the present time that came before the people with a policy of assisted immigration, whether it be that it is difficult to retain settlers after they come here, or that it is difficult to