

from using the opportunities afforded by his office for the purpose of private speculation: a practice which it is to be hoped, after this calamity, will be positively interdicted for the future. It was pretty clear that antagonism must arise between the interest of the nomad or hunter denizens of the prairie and that of agricultural civilization; and the first care of an administrator like Lawrence or a good military governor would have been to prevent that antagonism from leading to collision. But the Ottawa Government is not only partisan, and a slave to party necessities: it is too distant; its chiefs know too little of the North-West; they have to trust too much to local informants who are not always disinterested and trustworthy; appeal to them is often too slow and uncertain a process; their administration has engendered discontent among the settlers on the farms as well as among the Half-breeds. This disaster is full of political instruction; very likely it may be pregnant with political consequences. But for the present let us keep our hands off each other's throats and try to get the country out of its perils.

AMID the warlike preparations for the North-West the closing of the Legislature of Ontario was almost lost sight of. The close of the Session finds the Mowat Government as strongly entrenched behind its majority as before, the Opposition having made no visible progress towards its expulsion. Possibly the Redistribution Bill may be found to have strengthened it; but a mechanical change of boundaries, which has no inherent moral force, cannot be counted on as a source of permanent strength. The Opposition complains that the Government has not contented itself with the minimum of gerrymander; and if before the bill finally passed there was evidence of a design to secure favourable results for the Government in different constituencies by some of the new combinations, attempts to secure support in this way are apt to bring very uncertain results. The truth is that the Government was, in the absence of Redistribution, in no danger; and though it may gain by the new shuffle among the constituencies, the gain will not be great, and it is not certain which party the extension of the franchise will most assist. So long as the Opposition occupies the position of a political garrison liable to be called upon to do duty for the Ottawa Government it will make no headway. For an Ontario Opposition only one condition of success is possible: it must fight the battles of Ontario with a single eye to the interests of the Province, and in doing so it need not overstep the limits which the Constitution has prescribed. A keener-sighted leader of the Opposition than Mr. Meredith would find means of turning the alliance of the Government with Archbishop Lynch, from which it derives a portion of its strength, into an element of weakness. But this cannot be done by one in close alliance with the Ottawa Government, which depends, in Quebec, on the same source of strength that Mr. Mowat looks to for success in Ontario. An Opposition leader who looked exclusively to the interests of Ontario could do it and do it with effect.

THE *Montreal Herald* is grieved to find in THE WEEK an unaccountable proneness to make use of the false and misleading statements which are daily published by the *Globe* and other Grand Trunk organs for the malicious purpose of discrediting and embarrassing the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Unaccountable, if it exists, the proneness undoubtedly is: for we can undertake to say that among those who have anything to do, directly or indirectly, with our editorials, there is not one who has, or can be imagined to have, an interest or a feeling of any kind adverse to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, or to anybody connected with it. Our readers will, we think, bear us witness that, while we are opposed to the policy of the Government and to the construction of the road, or certain portions of it, as a public enterprise, we have never lost sight of the distinction between the case of the Government and that of the company, or failed to do the company justice to the utmost of our power. Nor are we aware that our editorials have ever been cited as those of an ally by any Grand Trunk organ or by any journals hostile to the Syndicate. It is a mistake to assume that all who regard this second application for assistance with any misgiving or hesitation, must be libellers in the pay of the Grand Trunk, fraudulent stock-jobbers, traitors running down the country, or emissaries of Satan. It is a mistake to assume that personal character is assailed when the corporate acts of a company are called in question. It is a mistake to assume that the disposition to criticize and demur is confined to Grits, for in private it is manifested almost as much by Tories. As a matter of course the Opposition in Parliament and its organs attack, and without measure, that which is identified with the Government. Equally as a matter of course, and with a partisanship not less unmeasured, the Government and its organs uphold that which the Opposition and its organs assail. A journal which has no party ties must try to set forth the case fairly, as it ought to be seen

by the public. The Syndicate was introduced to the nation by the Prime Minister as a body of capitalists possessing resources which, when combined with the public grant, would be amply sufficient to execute the work. This expectation has been disappointed. After one measure of public aid, the work is again at a stand, and cannot proceed without further help from the country. Inevitably remarks are made, and while some of them may be the offspring of commercial rivalry or political animosity, there are others which have at least apparent force and cannot be disposed of satisfactorily by mere objurgation. One of them is, that resources morally pledged to the national road have been expended on other roads which are the private enterprises of the company. It cannot be denied that the company did morally pledge its resources to the national road. But, as we have said more than once, the expenditure on the eastern lines right or wrong, has gone on with the full cognizance of the Government and Parliament, and must be held to have received their tacit approbation. Another remark, not without apparent force, is that, our allusion to which has drawn upon us the rebuke of the *Montreal Herald*. It is said that the Directors, while they come to Parliament for help to carry on the road, are themselves drawing a dividend of twenty-four per cent. on the money paid by them for a great mass of the stock which is in their hands. Has this allegation been, or can it be, denied? If it is untrue, we are ready to express our regret that we should have been led to accept it as true. But it is not denied by the *Montreal Herald*, nor, so far as we have seen, has it been denied by any advocate of the C. P. R. Its truth is implied by the argument urged in justification, which is that, a previous lot or lots of stock having been taken by the same parties at a higher price, it was but fair to reduce the average cost of their purchase. We must confess that we fail to see the validity of this plea, especially when it is considered that the help now sought from the nation, if it makes the stock go up, will throw proportionate gains into the hands of the large holders. Nor is much difference made by the fact that a particular director has, as he avers, not gained or even lost by his connection with the road. But we have ourselves urged what seems to us a sounder plea—the pressing necessity which existed at the time for selling stock in order to obtain money for the prosecution of the work. If this defence is still something less than satisfactory, it shares that character with the general history of this enterprise. In discussing the case of the company we have always made due allowance for the extra speed of construction, and, when doubts were raised as to the quality of the work, we have expressed our conviction that the road was solidly and well built. Very malignant enemies to a petitioner they can hardly be who, while they scrutinize his case in the public interest, end by seconding his prayer. We second the prayer of the C. P. R. for further help on the broad ground that the national enterprise having been undertaken cannot be left unfinished. Perhaps our support, though independent and critical, may, within the range of our influence, be not less valuable than that of notorious organs or thoroughgoing partisans. Between the Government and the Company, let us once more say, there is a distinction of which we never lose sight. The enterprise, having been undertaken and having been prosecuted so far, must now be carried to completion, whatever the additional cost may be. When it has been completed, the time will come for calling the Government to account for their enormous and, as we fear it will prove, unprofitable expenditure of the earnings of the Canadian people.

LET the Scott Act organization be as strong and as victorious as it will, its mechanical force is a widely different thing from reason, and reason alone will make us alter our opinions. Yet with regard to a moral question, and knowing that many of the clergy, though not those of the Church of England, are against us, we are specially anxious that there should be no mistake as to the ground on which we stand. Drunkenness, we hope, is as hateful to us as to the loudest professor, and we are willing to concur in any movement or measure, not involving tyranny or iniquity, by which the vice can be diminished. Our objection to such measures as the Scott Act is that by them the vice, instead of being diminished, is practically increased. While they create a dangerous precedent of legislative interference with private habits, fill society with bitterness, set up an inquisition in every village, wreck great industries and occasion a heavy loss of revenue, their practical effects, as regards the question of temperance, are the universal substitution of ardent spirits, which being small in bulk can be easily smuggled, for milder beverages, and the transfer of the trade from responsible and regulated to unlicensed and unregulated hands. The proofs, the overwhelming proofs, of this have been published in our own country even by journals which, bending to the popular gale, now affect an ecstasy of joy over every victory of the Scott Act. Neal Dow himself complains that