

Review of the Times.

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Parliament is proceeding well with practical work. There are few exciting debates, and to spectators the proceedings will be dull. But dulness in Parliament means that business and legislation are going on; and this, after all, is the main point; else we might as well have a mere debating society.

The most important matter, probably, before the House this Session, is the establishment of a government for the North-West. It is a striking comment on the results of Confederation that within so short a time large measures of this kind, involving the future of millions of a coming population, are the subjects of parliamentary discussion at our Capital.

Such measures elevate politics to a higher level than anything formerly dreamed of. Instead of interminable petty squabbles about matters of difference between Upper and Lower Canada, we can now enlarge our vision and take in the condition and destiny of regions ten times as large in extent as either of them. All these are ours. They have fallen to our lot only within a few years. We are like a man with a small patrimony, who has suddenly received a bequest of an immense extent of unreclaimed land alongside it. The care of this now occupies his thoughts, and the putting it in order he feels to be one of the most important works he can do.

The act for the organization of the Territory passed very quietly, and no one would have imagined the great issues that were involved in it. It provides for the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor, two stipendiary magistrates, and other officers; it appoints a Council of Government, and opens the way for a gradual introduction of the popular element; it prohibits the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor (a wise improvement); it establishes

a School System similar to that of Ontario, with a provision for Separate Schools. The seat of government appears to be fixed at Fort Pelly, which we cannot help feeling to be a mistake. The natural and commercial capital is Winnipeg, and experience has long proved that where the commercial capital is,—in the chief city of a State or Province,—there the seat of government ought to be. The American system of putting the seat of government in the geographical centre of a State is founded on a mistake. Such places are not the most convenient. The place "where people most do congregate"—where leading railroads centre, to which people most naturally gravitate—that is the place for the seat of government, no matter what its geographical position.

The new province has had a vigorous start of life. Winnipeg has risen from a hamlet to a town within a year or two. The country is beginning to fill up, and we know that the process once begun is likely to go on at an accelerating ratio year after year. We trust the new province may have a prosperous career and become the home of contented, industrious and sober millions, adding strength to our Confederation and affording a future to thousands in the older parts of Canada.

The Supreme Court Bill proceeds slowly. Its principle is most desirable; but it is difficult to harmonize conflicting views as to details. Here we see the disadvantage of different provinces maintaining radically different systems of law. Even religion has been brought into the discussion. A Romish prelate has fancied that such a court would have power to deal with cases of divorce—a groundless supposition, as the jurisdiction of the Court is appellant. A very important section of the Liberal party does not seem satisfied with