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## Editorial.

### CURRENT HISTORY.

THAT, which is attracting most attention just now in Canadian newspapers, and probably in the minds of most Canadians who take an interest in the public affairs of their country, is the work of the Tariff Commissioners. This Commission consists of Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce; Sir Oliver Mowat, Minister of Justice; Hon. W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance; Hon. Wm. Patterson, Controller of Customs. Their mission is to gather information with regard to the working of the present protective tariff, for the guidance of the Government in framing the new tariff bill which they are pledged to introduce at the approaching session. The larger number of the deputations which have so far been heard by the Commissioners have been composed of manufacturers. Most of these, naturally enough, plead for the continuance of the protection which has, no doubt, enriched many of them. Some mercantile deputations have also been heard, and two or three representatives of the farmers. The former held various opinions; the latter denounced protection as injurious and unfair to the

users or "consumers" of the manufactured goods. The question is one of great difficulty for the new Government.

Two paragraphs of President Cleveland's message to Congress, which was delivered about a week ago, are of special interest to all British subjects. In the first, the President assures Congress that there is no longer a difficulty between the Government of Great Britain and that of the United States in regard to the Venezuelan boundary; in the second, that progress has been made in the direction of an agreement between the two governments for the construction of a general treaty of arbitration, for the settlement of all difficulties which may hereafter arise between the two countries.

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND deals at length and cautiously with the insurrection in Cuba. He points out, for the benefit of Spain, that the Cubans have an undoubted right to redress of grievances and a measure of self-government; and that the insurgents are scarcely to be blamed for refusing to lay down their arms on the bare promise of Spain to grant reforms, without some guarantee for the fulfilment of those promises. Such a guarantee the United States has offered to Spain to furnish, if desired. At the same time, as the only government at present existing in Cuba is that of Spain. Inefficient though it is, the time has not arrived either for recognition of the insurgents, or for intervention, by the United States. It is plainly intimated, however, that the struggle cannot be permitted to go on much longer.

Two or three projects of great interest to the Dominion, and to other British colonies, are now under consideration. One is the proposal to establish a line of fast Atlantic steamships between a Canadian and a British port. Under the late Government the project was favorably considered, and a large subsidy promised by Parliament, but other necessary conditions have not yet been obtained. The scheme has ardent and influential advocates, who are of opinion that many and great advantages would accrue to Canada from the establishment of such a line, as it would materially shorten the ocean voyage between Europe and America, and the route (by the Pacific line already established) between Great Britain and the East, making Canada the highway of a large part of the travelling in both cases.

A second project referred to is that for the construction of a submarine cable between Vancouver, or some other point

on the Pacific Coast of the Dominion, and Australia. A number of British and colonial delegates are now considering the matter in England. Their sessions are, for the present, secret, but in all probability their conclusions will be given to the public in a few weeks. Such a cable would bring not only Canada, but the Mother Country as well, into direct and independent telegraphic communication with the Australian colonies, and with the great Eastern world, over British territory. There is, to say the least, a good prospect of the early completion of this enterprise, but the report of the delegates is eagerly looked for.

The third project is the greatest of all. It is nothing less than the Federation of the British Empire, that is, of the United Kingdom and the Colonies, especially the self-governing colonies. This large conception is warmly advocated by a number of prominent Canadians, among them some members of the teaching fraternity. Dr. Parkin, at present Principal of Upper Canada College, it will be remembered, "stumped the Empire"—to borrow an expression from the *Pall Mall Gazette*—on behalf of it. As the thoughtful reader will readily conceive, the difficulties in the way of framing and carrying out such a scheme are enormous, and are made almost, if not quite, insuperable by its being now complicated, whether necessarily or otherwise, with a proposal for preferential tariffs within the Empire, as against foreign countries. This would involve on the part of those colonies which, like Canada, tax British goods at the same rate as foreign a reduction of tariff in favor of the Mother Country as against outsiders. This might seem both reasonable and practicable, but for the fact that the Mother Country, acting on free trade principles and already admitting colonial products free, could not reciprocate save by taxing the products of foreign nations, and so not only raising the price of the bread-stuffs and other necessaries which she so largely imports for her own people, but incurring the danger of retaliatory tariffs by those nations.

WE thus briefly mention these important matters mainly in order to remind our readers that our Dominion seems just now to have reached a very important point, in its history, and is likely to make history very fast during the next few years. Teachers of the young should be among the most deeply interested and intelligent students of events.

AFFAIRS in relation to the Eastern question appear to be just now in a quiescent state. It is altogether likely that diplo-