

try, and whatever commercial advantages may be derived from that, will certainly follow its adoption. We cannot help thinking, however, that a little too much stress has been laid on this point in some quarters, and that a railway, even though it should pass through unsettled districts, will generally be found to develop resources previously lying idle and very often far more valuable than anticipated. There is good reason for believing that this will be found to be the case with the unsettled portions of this central line Mr. Fleming says.—

"A line through the centre of New Brunswick would take the supplies for the lumbering trade, and would rapidly settle up the large tracts of cultivable land in this district. A railway so situated would, as a line of communication, have similar effects on the trade and progress of New Brunswick as the River St. John has had, with this additional advantage, it would be open all the year instead of half of it.

"In much less time, it is believed than has been occupied in settling and improving the lands which nature made accessible by the river would the artificial means of communication result in populating the interior of the country through the greater part of its length, and thus develop and foster a traffic which does not now exist."

Regarding the quantity and quality of the land in this region, the same authority says—

"Between Fredericton and the River Restigouche, the land referred to above affording the line of exploration of last year and considered generally suitable for settlement, embraces an area of possibly not much less than 2,000,000 of acres. Comparing this extensive tract of land with the soil of Upper Canada I am inclined to think that it is generally better than any of the unsettled districts in that part of the country."

We shall watch the progress of this question with great interest, being fully convinced that a route near the one we have been speaking of, is best calculated to serve evenly the interests of all four of the Provinces of the Dominion, of Ontario and Quebec more especially, by giving them the readiest means of access to two Atlantic ports instead of one.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

THAT the right of self government is an inestimable blessing, and one which cannot be too highly cherished or too carefully guarded, is a proposition which at this time of day is not very likely to be disputed. Men have fought and nations bled in the struggle to obtain this blessing, and yet too often the goal has only been reached, when culpable indifference or something akin to it, has allowed the prizes as it were to slip from the grasp—and nations and communities have drifted back to a state of things but little removed in point of general benefit from that which previously existed. This perhaps is not so much to be observed in the most weighty affairs of general government as in the misdoings of municipal institutions. That municipal institutions in themselves are of the highest value cannot be doubted. As adjuncts to the higher branches of government, and more particularly as exercising an educational influence in training men to the proper exercise of their political duties, their value is unquestionable, yet from various causes it is sad to find that the full measure of good has been obtained from them, and in a great many instances there has been so much of positive evil developed, that many persons have lost faith in the system. This can easily be wondered at when we look around and see the results which in too many instances are apparent. Everywhere we meet the same bitter complaint of incompetency, extravagance, and too often corruption. Taxes enormously increased, public complaints treated with contempt, and judging from present appearance, but little prospect of improvement. The notorious extravagance and corruption of the New York municipality is world renowned, and there it has reached such a pitch that the whole constituency appears to be debased, and it is difficult to see how or in what way to set about amendment. Unfortunately there are not wanting indications among ourselves of a tendency which at least may have the effect of precipitating us on a similar course. From almost every municipality in the Dominion comes the complaint of increased taxation, and in many instances of corruption and extravagant expenditure. We do not wish to particularize or to make invidious distinctions, but we are quite sure that most of our readers must admit the truth of the statement. Now it may, or may not be the case that these charges of extravagance and corruption are well founded, probably in many instances not, but so long as the impression exists, it is calculated to bring municipal institutions into something very like contempt, and to hinder the cause of progress and rational

self government. The remedy for all this lies with the constituencies, and more particularly with men of character and respectability within them. So long as men of that class persist in holding themselves aloof from civic affairs as something beneath their notice, so long will the offices be filled by men whose first consideration is to make money and influence for themselves, and, by corrupting their adherents, to render their power permanent.

Let, then men of character and standing be willing to identify themselves with and seek to perfect the working of our civic and municipal institutions before it be too late, and above all let constituencies be careful to give such men (whenever they can be induced to come forward) an earnest and discriminating support, and the grievances complained of will be speedily removed.

PROGRESS OF BRITAIN AND BRITISH AMERICA.

A little more than a hundred and fifty years ago, England had a population of only some five million and a half or six million inhabitants. Her people were rude and warlike. Her coal and iron mines were scarcely worked, and her copper mines were considered as of no value. The whole annual revenue of the crown has been estimated at \$7,000,000. The only army which the law recognized was the militia, which was popularly estimated at 180,000 men, and which was maintained without any expense to the crown. Every man who possessed \$2,500 a year or \$30,000 of personal estate, was bound to provide, equip, and pay, at his own charge one horseman. Every man who had \$250 a year derived from land, or \$2,000 of personal estate was charged with one pikeman or musketeer. Smaller proprietors were joined into societies, and each society according to its means was charged with the support of one horseman or one footman. The whole regular army kept up, although not recognized by law, consisted of 7,000 foot and 1700 cavalry. The navy was counted formidable. There were nine first rate men of war, fourteen second rates, and thirty nine third rates. It was maintained at a cost of \$2,000,000. The whole charge of the army, navy, and ordnance at the time of Charles the Second, was about \$2,750,000 a year.

At that time agriculture was in its infancy. The arable and pasture lands were not supposed to amount to much more than half the area of the kingdom. The remainder consisted of moor, forest, and fen. The rotation of crops was almost unknown. It was the custom to kill sheep and oxen in large numbers at the beginning of the cold weather, owing to the impossibility of keeping them alive at a time when grass was scarce. Great as has been the change in the rural life, the change in the cities has been still greater. A century and a half ago London contained but 500,000 inhabitants. Her shipping did not exceed 70,000 tons. She had no sanitary arrangements, and no police. The streets were filthy and at night they were unlighted. Of the other chief towns and cities which now exist, some were not then known, and others have increased their population ten and twenty fold. In 1655 the population of Birmingham was but 4,000, now it is over 200,000. At that time Sheffield contained but 2,000 inhabitants, now its population is over 150,000. Liverpool at the same period was beginning to rise into notice. Her population was but 4,000; her shipping but 1400 tons. Now her population is going on to 500,000, and her shipping is between five and six hundred thousand tons.

Steam was not made use of in those days of course, and it was by the high-ways that travellers and freight were transported from place to place. These high-ways were worse or as bad as any to be found in the newest or oldest settlement in British America. On the best lines of communication says an historian, the rats were deep, the decrees precipitous, and the way often such as it was impossible to distinguish from the heath and fen which lay on both sides. The mud was deep, and coaches and waggons often stuck fast until a team of cattle tugged them out of the slough. Locomotion was slow in those days. "Flying" coaches did their fifty miles a day, but this was thought too fast for safety, accordingly it was recommended by a large class that no public carriage should be allowed to go more than thirty miles a day. No doubt the sage ones who made this recommendation were the forerunners of those who, on the introduction of railways, got up an agitation against their use, on grounds of political economy and public safety. There were no newspapers in those days, and the Post Office

was thought to be doing well when its gross receipts touched \$375,000 per annum.

Such was the England of little over a century and a half ago. Yet even before that period she was counted one of the great nations of Europe, and she preserved the balance of power on the continent. The progress she has made in a hundred and fifty years is a matter of history. It is known to and acknowledged by the world. Great and dazzling as it has been however, it has been outdone by the progress of British America within less than half a century. There are those now living who have shot wild fowl over Toronto in places where the real estate is now worth \$200 a foot. The growth of Montreal has been marvellous. Its immense wealth, its great population, its splendid private residences, its noble public buildings, its admirable quays and docks, and its large shipping, are the growth of but a few years. Other towns and cities have risen with equal rapidity to opulence and importance. It is but yesterday since the Grand Trunk and other railways opened up a path through the "howling wilderness," and villages and towns sprang up as if by magic all along their track. The discovery of oil has done in the Western part of the Dominion what the introduction of railways has done every where. In the increase of wealth, in the increase of our population, in the growth of our prosperity and importance, British America has advanced faster than England with all its might and glory, and can we doubt that we shall do so in the future as we have done in the past? Indeed there is every reason that we should progress faster than the Mother country. We have the benefit of all her experience. We start in the race at a time when civilization has reached a high point, when steam and the electric telegraph have long been invented. We are not so favored as England by our geographical position, but still we have only two causes of fear in the world. First, ourselves, and secondly, our neighbours. And if we are true to ourselves, not all the power of the United States can ever hurt us. We are certainly favored by nature in that we have vast possessions on which to raise teeming populations. Great Britain and Ireland compared in size to British America, are insignificant. True a large portion of our territory lies beyond the temperate zone. But Russia has to contend with the same obstacles, and it is the fashion now-a-days to speak of her as one of the growing powers which overshadow the world. The hardy sons of the North have ever been looked upon as made of more enduring stuff than the effeminate children of southern climes.

It is also much in our favor that in this new world we have no pauper population to support as they have in the Mother Country. True, there are poor people in this country; but in numbers they bear no proportion to the innumerable class who, in European countries, live entirely on charity. Able-bodied paupers are to be met with in crowds everywhere in England; here they are rarely seen; and in no case is their vocation excusable. We may also lay it to our advantage that our taxes are light compared to those payable in the Old Country. We have no standing army to support; no navy to maintain; no ambassadors to keep up in regal pomp at foreign Courts. We are not plagued with the affairs of other nations, as long as they do not affect ourselves. The balance of power merely serves as a topic of newspaper discussion when the times are dull. At present the Canadian public heart is supposed to be so strangely agitated by an event of no greater importance than a general election, in which no principle is at stake, and in which office alone is the object struggled for. With all these advantages in our favor, ought we not to be a happy and prosperous people, compared even to John Bull and his happy and prosperous family? Of course, we do not set it down to our advantage that the country should allow itself to be agitated by mere demagoguism; we do not think there is any such danger. It is one thing for the local papers to represent the local and general community as in a blaze of excitement as to whether Smith or Jones is to be returned to Parliament. But such shams are as old as the days of Pickwick, and much older. In reality, the country is not excited or agitated. It is wonderfully calm and stoical, notwithstanding what the papers say about it. Canada, we rejoice to say, hates demagoguism and charlatanism, and this moment she is very busily engaged in looking after the main chance. She is really profiting by the history of other nations, and the experience of the past. She is laying the foundations broad and deep of a new nationality, and a bright and glorious future.