

ministered a severe reprimand to a pilot for attempting to pass in a bend of the dredged channel when by waiting a little he could have passed safely. In that case neither pilot had reported, and it was found necessary to remind all the pilots by circular of the by-laws, which require a report of every pilotage immediately on its completion. In this year's fatality, however, delay in revealing what had happened was, of course, out of the question. At present the certificates of both pilots concerned have been surrendered till the inquiry is over, and it is to be hoped, both for their sakes and the credit of the service, that they will come out of it without blame.

In our last issue mention was made of the change of opinion that was gradually taking place in favour of the use of the 24-hour system of time notation instead of the traditional *ante-meridiam* and *post-meridiam* system. The last number of the *Locomotive Engineers' Monthly Journal* contains the report of the special committee on uniform standard time appointed by the American Society of Civil Engineers, of which Mr. Sandford Fleming, C.M.G., was chairman, introduced by a letter from Mr. Charles Paine, General Manager of the New York, West Shore and Buffalo Railroad. Therein it is stated that to the society's circular of inquiry there had been received sixty-one replies in favour of the 24-hour system and thirty-eight against it. It being deemed advisable to obtain the reasons on which the latter based their rejection, they were asked for them. The reasons given are certainly not serious, and when contrasted with the mass of intelligent opinion in favour of the change, they sink into insignificance. The letters from Mr. Van Horne, President of the C.P.R. Company, and Mr. Collingwood Schreiber, Chief Engineer and General Manager of Government railways, show that "the new notation has been thoroughly tested for two or three years on 3,657 miles of railway; that no difficulty whatever has been experienced in introducing the change; that it has been readily accepted by the public without a single objection being heard; that its extreme simplicity and the impossibility of errors resulting from its use facilitates the movements of trains and promotes the public safety." The report of the committee adds that the number of miles just given will soon be increased to 6,710. The system can be operated with ease and without inconvenience, and even those who object at first as to an innovation will come in time to recognize the advantages of the change.

The visit to Montreal of Prof. Roberts, of King's College, Windsor, N.S., author of "Orion" and "In Divers Tones," at the invitation of the Society of Canadian Literature, and his lecture at the conversation given in his honour on the 22nd inst. by that society, the Society for Historical Studies, and the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society, will make last week memorable in Montreal's literary annals. The attendance of *littérateurs* and persons interested in our literary movement, both ladies and gentlemen, was large, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. Elsewhere we publish a brief report of Mr. Robert's lecture.

#### PROS AND CONS.

Some time ago we made brief reference, under another heading, to a work recently published in England in which Mr. Alexander Gordon makes what he calls "a brief statement of the case against Imperial Federation." The scheme so named he

considers illusory and impalpable. At the same time he confesses his approval of a federal union of the British Isles—with separate local governments for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. He objects to Mr. Gladstone's Government of Ireland bill on account of the clause that would exclude Ireland from representation in the Imperial Parliament. But to give the colonies any such right of representation would be, he argues, to swamp the mother country and destroy her legitimate influence as the centre and head of the Empire. He looks with equanimity upon the ultimate independence of Britain's great outlying possessions. He would not hasten their separation, but he believes that the natural tendency of colonies is to assume independent life after they have reached a certain stage in their career. He sees no reason why Canada, Australia, the Cape and the West Indies may not part from England, when their respective times for doing so successively arrive, on the best terms and remain thereafter on the same good understanding as before. Instead of being colonies, they would then be free autonomous states, in allegiance with their former motherland. But that they should be taken into a federal union and recognized as parts of the Empire, with a voice in its affairs, on the same footing as England or Ireland, Scotland or Wales, Mr. Gordon looks upon as out of the question, a mere delusion, an impracticable dream. The result of such an attempt to draw closer the ties that bind us and the other colonies to the motherland would, in his opinion, be more likely to end in disruption than in the consolidation of the Empire. It would paralyze the United Kingdom, destroy its prestige, expose it to be outvoted on problems of vital importance, and deprive it of all freedom of initiative. What, then, is the best course to pursue? Just to remain as we are, neither hastening nor trying to avert our destiny.

Such also, though in fewer words, is the judgment that Lord Derby pronounces on the Imperial Federation movement. "Imperial Federation is a dream," says his Lordship, and, with that statement for its text, the *Toronto Week* some time ago preached a little sermon at Dr. Grant. "It is, no doubt," it adds, "a grand and inspiring dream, as Dr. Grant showed in his eloquent lecture at Kingston the other day, but it is a dream, nevertheless, in its visionary and impracticable character, as the first serious attempt to realize it will, no doubt, make plain." And then the *Week* pictures for its readers the position of Canada, with its 5,000,000, in commercial and political union with 315,000,000 of people—some of them at the ends of the earth—and asks them to contemplate the complete swallowing up of her political influence. But Dr. Grant is not the least dismayed. He has carried his federation principles round the globe and brought them back to Kingston stronger and more pronounced than ever. Dr. Grant is no new convert to the doctrine of Imperial Unity—a term which, with him, we prefer to Imperial Federation—for he learned it a generation ago from Joseph Howe. "Who was Joseph Howe?" he asks; and he answers: "A poet and the greatest statesman Nova Scotia has produced. He won responsible government for his native province against an opposing array of forces, and then ruled the province for the greater part of his life." And like Howe, Archibald and Tupper, Blake and Mowat and Sir John Macdonald are unionists. But it may be said, adds Dr. Grant, that these men—Sir John and Mr. Mowat—show no activity in the cause, though one of them had pluckily asked: "What

are statesmen for but to overcome difficulties?" "I am glad," rejoins Dr. Grant, for the benefit of that invidious questioner, "that they do not. Their work is to execute the mandates of the people, and they have received no mandate as yet on this subject." Dr. Grant thinks the opinion of men like the late Mr. Forster, founder of the League in England; like Lord Rosebery, its president; like the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, who moved the resolution that Mr. Mowat seconded, of too much weight to be dismissed as a dream even by Lord Derby. As for the *Week's* comparison of figures, he asks whether Britain is not the governing power of India to-day, and how the addition of ten or eleven millions of British citizens in Canada, South Africa and Australia would affect injuriously that governing power. Canada is unstable, lacking full stature of political maturity, as the *Week* admits, and such instability is bad for her. Dr. Grant will give the fullest rights of citizenship in the federal Empire. As for the objection on the ground of distance, Dr. Grant recalls that the day was when the Alleghanies, the Mississippi, the Rocky Mountains, the barren lands between the Upper Ottawa and the Red River were deemed sufficient to divide nations, but that day is past. "Modern conditions have changed all that; more truly so where the sea is concerned than the land." As long as Canada has sons as loyal and hopeful as the Principal of Queen's University, we need not fear for her future. As he admits, however, neither Sir John Macdonald nor any local premier has as yet received any mandate from the people in favour of the federal scheme, and one premier, at least, is not likely to risk it as a plank in his platform. Nevertheless, the spirit that actuates federationists, like Dr. Grant, is the right spirit, for whatever may be the details of their scheme (and on that point no definite understanding has yet been reached), they boldly and constantly maintain one grand principle—that of Imperial unity—and as far as it represents that principle, we are in hearty sympathy with the movement.

#### LITERARY LIFE IN CANADA.

In January last a new society came into being in this city, mainly through the instrumentality of Mr. W. D. Lighthall. Its object was implied in the name which, after some discussion, it was decided to give it—the Society of Canadian Literature, and that object has been fairly carried out by the reading of generally carefully prepared papers on our more eminent writers in French and English, in prose and poetry. It was deemed well to close the first session by a meeting somewhat different from the others, and two other societies gladly concurring, and Prof. Roberts kindly consenting to lecture, the result was the conversation of the 22nd inst. The oldest of the three societies—the Numismatic and Antiquarian—was represented by some of its members, Mr. W. D. Lighthall, its secretary, acting as its spokesman in the unavoidable absence of the Hon. Mr. Justice Baby, its president. The Society for Historical Studies, which, though young, has done some excellent work, was represented by its vice-president, Mr. W. J. White, and by its secretary, Mr. J. P. Edwards, and a number of other members. The Society of Canadian Literature was represented by the Rev. Prof. J. Clark Murray, LL.D., who presided at the meeting, by Mr. Lighthall, and a full gathering of members.

After some suitable words of welcome from the chairman and Messrs. White and Lighthall, Prof. Roberts announced that his subject was "Literary Life in Canada," and took for his text a passage from Stedman expressive of the difficulty by which American idealism was retarded, and, after introducing his subject, spoke first of neglect, and doubted if it had ever killed really pre-eminent