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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

WE are sorry to remark that the "Scottish Home Rule Association," to which we have already drawn attention, seems resolved to continue its quite unnecessary and mischievous work. It will not be possible for us, this week, to comment upon the proceedings at the meeting; but we shall probably have the painful duty on a future occasion, of exposing the fallacies propounded thereat.

"THEY, (the Government) stand for the National Policy, for the principle of ample protection to Canadian Industries, for Canada for Canadians—against Annexation, against Free Trade, against Unrestricted Reciprocity, against Commercial Union." Such is the *Empire's* interpretation of Sir John A. Macdonald's recent speech at the Sherbrooke banquet. The complaint is sometimes made with reference to the speeches of leading members of the Dominion Government, particularly those of the Premier, that they deal in generalities and cross-firing at political opponents but fail to discuss broad questions of policy. Sir John A. Macdonald's speech above referred to, if rightly interpreted by the *Empire*, is not open to this criticism. It makes the one broad issue between the two great Canadian parties, the tariff issue. This is well. The question is worthy of the fullest consideration and discussion—worthy to be made the battle-ground of Canadian, as it is likely to be of American, politics for many years to come. If we must have parties, it is infinitely better for all concerned that they should be divided on a great question of principle and policy than that they should be engaged in a mere struggle for office. Much will depend on the still unprejudicable outcome of the Presidential contest, but in almost any conceivable event the reciprocity question in some form is pretty sure to be the question in Canada for the next three years at least.

MR. VANHORNE's letter in the *Mail*, in defence of the action of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the matter of the Red River Valley Railway Crossing, will have been read with much interest by all who wish to know the first-named company's views in regard to its own case and

conduct. The major part of the letter simply explains a fact which seemed scarcely to need explanation, viz., that the legislation of Parliament at its last session had reference only to the annulling of clause 15 (the monopoly clause) of the Canadian Pacific contract, and said nothing whatever as to the question of crossings. Hence Mr. VanHorne argues that the Canadian Pacific was left in exactly the same position as the Grand Trunk and other roads holding Dominion charters, and has the same right to resist the crossing of its track by other railroads. Mr. VanHorne also points out the obvious truth that level crossings are danger points needing ample safeguards. He further contends that the Canadian Pacific Company has a right, if it chooses, to dispute the right of the Red River Valley Railway to cross its lines at all, and even to question the constitutionality of the Act of the Manitoba Legislation chartering that railway, and claims that in a supposed analogous case "the officers of the Grand Trunk Railway would be guilty of neglect of duty did they not seek by every proper means to protect the property entrusted to their charge from injury," the injury referred to being, by inference from the context, competition in business.

It is well that Mr. VanHorne has at length seen fit to argue the question. His letter begins with an allusion to the presumed ability of most readers to distinguish between rhyme and reason. May we not assume in like manner that most readers are capable of distinguishing between the strictly legal or technical, and the moral meaning and obligation of a contract, and of perceiving that the grossest injustice may sometimes be done under cover of the strict letter of a law? It is literally true that in the agreement quoted, whereby the Canadian Pacific Company consented to the annulling of the monopoly clause of its contract with the Dominion Government, "the Red River Valley Railway was not referred to, nor any other railway," and that "the Province of Manitoba was not a party to the agreement, and the Company had nothing to do with the Province in the matter." But did not every intelligent man in and out of Parliament know that the prime object of the legislation was to enable the Red River Valley Railway to enter the Province and cross the Canadian Pacific as often as necessary? Would Parliament and the country have consented to the guarantee on any other understanding? Could the Dominion Government, the other party to the agreement, have intended that it should still be a matter of doubt whether the Manitoba Government could complete the Red River Valley Railway, so as to secure the competition which was its reason-to-be? Is the Canadian Pacific, and Mr. VanHorne as its President, not under the same moral obligation which binds any man of honour to abide by the obvious intention of a contract, or, as a writer on ethics would put it, to abide by an agreement in the sense in which he understands the party with whom the agreement is made to understand it? Either Mr. VanHorne must admit that the Canadian Pacific is guilty of violating the spirit of its covenant with the Government and Parliament, that is, with the whole country, Manitoba included, or he must fall back on the theory that corporations, having no souls, are incapable of moral obligations; that they can be bound only by the strict letter of contracts; and that all arguments based on equity rather than law are to it and its officers mere "blatherings." In that case the burden is shifted to the Dominion Government, and the country, Manitoba included, must hold it responsible for any failure to secure the full measure of rights and liberties for which the guarantee of the Canadian Pacific bonds was given as an ample equivalent.

It can hardly be necessary to add that the foregoing is without reference to the necessary and undoubted right of the Dominion Government to regulate the mode in which any railway built under its charter shall be crossed. The Manitoba Commissioner asked it to determine the mode of crossing; hence that point is out of the discussion. Some very serious queries are suggested by Mr. VanHorne's bold assertion that "the right of way of the Canadian Pacific Company is its own property, bought and paid for with its own money, and, subject only to certain laws in the public interest, it is just as sacred to the purposes of the company, as is Mr. Goldwin Smith's hearthstone sacred to his uses." Are then the millions of dollars and the millions of acres given by the country an absolute gift, and does the Canadian Pacific Company really hold in fee simple a belt of Canadian territory stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific?