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## Editorial Notes.

### THE QUEBEC BUDGET.

QUEBEC financiers should take to heart the sublime yet practical maxims of Wilkins Micawber. Income £20; expenditure, £19 19s. 6d.; result happiness. Income £20, and expenditure £20 0s. 6d.; result misery. Yet the nearest approach to economy that the new finance minister can promise is a deficit of a million and three-quarters for the first year, another deficit of a million and a quarter for the next, and a probable balance between income and expenditure for the third. We fear that before three years have passed he will say with the late champion wit and stutterer of New York, "I've been b-b-burning the candle so long at b-both ends that I'm p-p-precious near the middle."

### THE TONIC OF SUCCESS.

THE remarks made at such times as these on the health of our leading statesmen seem to point to the conclusion that their nerves and constitutions are strained by the responsibilities and toils of leadership to a point incompatible with robust health, and that only the stimulus of hope or the elation of success can keep them always strung up to concert pitch. They are overtrained, as a jockey would say. Sir John meets the House in great force and high spirits, but Mr. Blake has been complaining of ill-health ever since the elections left him with only a more respectable minority than before. Every one remembers how Sandfield Macdonald's defeat hastened his death, and how Mr. Mackenzie's health was entirely shattered by the disastrous general election of 1878 and the events which followed thereafter. Despite the disease that was fated to be the death of Sandfield Macdonald, and the overwork that had already told so heavily on Mr. Mackenzie's iron constitution, there is no doubt that either would have been physically benefited by the tonic of success that braces the nerves of jaded ambition like a draught of the elixir of life.

### THE DUTY ON BOOKS.

THE publishers and the booksellers are at issue on the question of the proposed increase in the duty on imported stationery and cheap literature. The booksellers are not free-traders, but they plainly see that an increased duty means a reduction in the volume of their business. It would do little to increase the sale of books of Canadian publication, and would cut off a large supply of cheap literature of the purest and most wholesome kind. The public, who are buying largely of the stores of English classics now placed at their disposal, think that the present price, which is about 50 per cent. above that paid in England, is quite high enough, and the result of an increased duty will simply mean a curtailment of expenditure in that direction, not an increased demand for literature published here. English books are now sold so largely that it would not pay to publish in Canada. The taste which the reading of such works cultivates is distinctly in favour of the better class of books published here, and destroys all fondness for flashy and debasing fiction. We hope the Government may take the side of the booksellers, and do nothing that may encourage the sale of the worst class of Canadian publications.

### THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

SOME of our contemporaries are giving selections from the recently-issued volume of the Registrar-General. We are always grateful for valuable information, whencesoever it may be obtained; but are we really expected to accept seriously any remarks founded on these returns as if they were matters of fact? While a fact completely stated is valuable in proportion to its rarity, a selection of half-facts is as uncertain, and of about as much practical use, as a chameleon. Our vital statistics are half or even three-quarter facts, published with the pomp and circumstance of official authority to mislead unwary theorists. The ancient Larnspex who could pass another of the craft without a smile must find a parallel in the Deputy Registrar who can without a wink present to his official chief the statements that Canada's birth-rate is 22 in 1,000, and that of England 50 per cent. greater! Even poor Ireland, with her load of pauperism, landlordism, and the emigration that drains off the young and vigorous, has a better showing than Canada—24 in 1,000. The number of centenarians, 23 of whom died within the year, would be a most remarkable fact but for the significant limitation that only one was a native-born Canadian, and hence the other 22 were probably the only witnesses to the event of their own birth. Can any one suggest a means for bringing these (in more