

THE RETIREMENT OF MR. BLAKE.

This event suggests reflections of a very mixed nature. In the first place everyone must sincerely regret that the hon. gentleman's retirement is really caused by much shaken health, not to be longer trifled with.

In the next place the loss to the Opposition of an able leader of high character is a loss to the country. For, notwithstanding some serious errors and weaknesses, Mr. Blake's character is a high one, and it is deeply to be regretted that the impartial verdict of the future cannot ignore some failures in precisely that quality of high-spirited integrity with which he has been so largely credited for many years. But this is little more than saying that Mr. Blake is not perfect. Mr. Blake cannot fairly be taxed with the ill-success of his party; but is rather to be sympathized with in that neither he nor his party found it possible to formulate a policy. Without a policy they came into office on the Pacific Scandal, and without a policy they have remained. But the pity of it is that in default of a policy the party should have been unable to confine itself to the legitimate criticism of Opposition; but, in its eagerness to upset its enemies, has grasped at ill-considered weapons, and persistently gone with them into crooked ways. The weapons, like the war office cutlasses and bayonets, were sure to "go back" on it, and the ways to end in a swamp of discredit.

It has been Mr. Blake's unfortunate weakness that he either could not steer his party clear of these temptations, or himself lacked the fortitude to put them aside. No doubt the recent cause of events has been discouraging, but Mr. Blake has missed the line of conduct which would have elevated and sustained his spirit under defeat. Perhaps growing ill-health had something to do with it. Be this as it may, it has to be recorded that Mr. Blake has not disdained to keep alive some of the worst features and tendencies of Canadian politics. It has to be said that he has traded on rivalries of race and religion, and must share with his party at large the reproach of unpatriotic sentiments. The country cannot forget the audacious turning of coat when Riel was hanged, and it does not like to hear itself systematically abused and degraded in the face of the world. We do not care to insist on other points. The Opposition is a great necessity to Parliamentary action, but no opposition can afford to forget that, to be of its full value, it must keep itself respectable.

It has been suggested—and we think it not amiss to repeat the suggestion—that it is a favorable opportunity for the Opposition to reconsider their policy.

Mr. Laurier, who is reported to be likely to succeed to the leadership, is said to possess a suavity of address, which, so far as that qualification goes, will give him some advantage over Mr. Blake, whose manner can scarcely be called happy; but it is impossible but that the more commanding ability of the late leader must be sorely missed.

There seems to be an idea that the leadership should at this juncture fall to a Quebec politician. There can be no objection if he is the right man, but we should have thought that, on the whole, Sir Richard Cartwright combined the qualifications to perhaps a larger extent than any other prominent man on his side.

A WEIGHTY QUESTION.

A report comes from Ottawa that a Mr. Kamper, representing a syndicate of German capitalists, has approached the government with proposals to buy the Intercolonial Railway and its branches. To our mind the proposal has much to recommend it. In the first place this road is not and never has been run so as to meet the wants and necessities of those who are obliged by circumstances to use it, nor has it ever been other than a burden on the resources of the government, which we would be glad to see removed. The Syndicate further proposes, it is said, to acquire the North Shore road and to build a bridge over the St. Lawrence near Quebec. This last has been for several years a growing necessity of trade, and we hail with pleasure any arrangement that gives fair promise of its fulfilment. Mr. Kamper also announces that the Syndicate for which he speaks intends putting up extensive iron smelting and reduction works in Pictou County, and importing over a thousand skilled German iron-workers to introduce the methods of manufacturing iron and steel in use in their own country. Now, this portion of the announced programme is in itself worth some temporary sacrifice to secure. It implies a tremendous impetus being given to the development of one of the largest and most important of our natural and now latent resources; the investment in this province of an immense amount of capital; the employment of a large quantity of more or less unskilled labor and the introduction and addition to our population of a very considerable body of the most desirable class of immigrants in the world. Here we diverge to point out a marked characteristic of a German which distinguishes him as a settler from all others. The Briton or the Frenchman is given to looking backwards regretfully to the country which he has left. Distance lends enchantment to his view, and he is ever comparing in his mind "the old home" with the new, to the disparagement of the latter. In his heart of hearts he enacts the part of the daughters of Israel on Babylon's banks, and endures his "exile" in the hope of some day "making his pile" and then "going home" to enjoy it. The German, on the other hand, at once identifies himself with his new home. He feels that he has deliberately made his choice and is determined to justify his judgment by proving that he has settled in the place in the world best adapted for him. He at once sees that his own good depends on the progress and development of the land of his choice, and he makes himself a part of it. He does not regard with cynicism manners, customs and institutions of his new location, but adopts them naturally and gracefully, and feels, and is, as truly a citizen as one born there. His children, as a rule,

grow up speaking the language, attending the public schools and sharing the thoughts and the feelings of the natives around them.

But another important consideration is that the indications are strong that the I. C. R. must ere long cease to be a work operated by the government. The C. P. R., it is understood, has serious thoughts of acquiring it and thus completing their ocean to ocean line. We have the highest appreciation of the Canadian Pacific, but we doubt the wisdom of giving one gigantic corporation the virtually exclusive control of all the land-carrying trade of the country. We believe that it would be more to the interests of the public to have this immense power and influence divided between friendly but still rival corporations. If, therefore, the German Syndicate really means business, and if the government, in making a bargain with it, reserves a proper control over such important matters as tariff rates, &c., its propositions might merit favorable consideration, but there should be no mistake about the efficiency of the control, and it behooves the government to move with foresight, and with great caution, in the matter.

THE BLUE BOOKS—THE NOVA SCOTIA MILITIA.

We were unable, in giving a short summary of some prominent features of the Major-General's report, to embody within due limits any reference to those of the Deputy-Adjutant's General. Probably the only one of much interest to our readers is that of Lt.-Colonel Worsley, D. A. G. for Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

The King's (Kentville) Troop of Cavalry, the only mounted force in Nova Scotia, is spoken of as a useful troop, altho' the horses are small, a defect incident to the country. There were many recruits, but their drill, both mounted and dismounted, was very fair, and their outpost duties intelligently performed. The saddlery was in excellent condition, a very important point; arms clean, books complete and well kept, camp duties well performed, and there is a trumpeter fairly trained.

The Halifax Brigade of Garrison Artillery is reported as short of complement. The Lunenburg and Pictou Batteries receive commendation as well drilled and smart Infantry Companies, and those of Yarrmouth and Digby gave satisfaction to the Inspector of Artillery, who comments favorably on the detachments sent by them to St. John for annual practice with rifled guns. But this commendation itself discloses the fact that the whole Artillery Force of Nova Scotia is, for want of artillery equipment, inefficient as representing that branch of the service. It is no fault of the several corps themselves, which, if properly supplied, would doubtless be quite able to hold their own with the numerous efficient batteries throughout the Dominion, which are more fortunate in this respect. This state of things must be very discouraging to both officers and men.

The 63rd and 66th Battalions are very favorably reported on. Of the 63rd Col. Worsley says, "they turned out nearly full strength and were beautifully clean, except the band, and were decidedly the best drilled Battalion I have seen since I came here."

The 66th "were remarkably clean," and their arms and accoutrements "in excellent order." Their band was deserving of special notice, and their general organization "much improved."

Both regiments receive very high praise on a very important point, the excellent order of their books, accounts, service rolls, pay sheets, &c., which were complete in every particular and correct.

The 72nd, 69th, and two companies of the 78th, went into camp at Aldershot in September. The target practice was "very satisfactorily performed, and the transport arrangement good. The health of the men was excellent. Some want of knowledge in cleaning arms was noticed by Major Irving, the Musketry Instructor, but the men were two-thirds recruits. Nevertheless, this defect in a matter of the plainest commonsense, but of the utmost importance, should not exist."

The two companies of the 78th received the highest praise of having been "patterns for the whole camp," but all ranks "worked with a will, the conduct of the men was exemplary, and there was a marked improvement at the close of the camp."

The Y. M. C. A. are thanked for their kindness in supplying books, periodicals and stationery.

The 75th Battalion were in Regimental Camp. This corps was wanting in experience, and required the assistance of extra Staff Officers and N. C. O.'s, but it is of excellent raw material. Col. Worsley, however, says, "after twelve days I hardly recognized the same men," as they were most anxious and willing to learn. They are reported as the best shooting battalion in the district. The conduct of the men was excellent, and, tho' so near a town, the D. A. G. heard of no case of drunkenness. The band is stated to be the best of any rural band he has seen in Canada. The hearty co-operation of Lt.-Colonel Kaulbach, the commanding officer, is as heartily acknowledged, and the officers are strongly recommended to attend the Infantry School at Fredericton. Indeed, "this cannot be too urgently impressed on all officers, young officers especially."

It is almost needless to say that the efficiency of the camps is largely due to the quiet energy, the firmness and the thorough knowledge of his duties, of the Deputy-Adjutant General, who, in addition to his general military capability, happens to be a musketry officer of long experience, a most desirable qualification in a militia staff-officer.

It is as difficult to catalogue books as it is to catalogue some other things. A librarian in a Boston library lately confessed that a work on "Great Roots" was found entered under *Agriculture*, and a book entitled "The Fountain of Life" under *Water*.