

THE EASTERN PROVINCES AND THE TARIFF.

TARIFFS and taxes are not received with pleasure anywhere; they never were; they never will be. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that the tariff lately imposed upon the Lower Provinces of the Dominion should have created discontent, especially amongst the anti-union party. It is no matter that the tariff in question is the same as that existing in Ontario and Quebec, it is no matter that the people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have to bear no greater burthen than the inhabitants of what was lately Upper and Lower Canada; it is no matter that the Intercolonial Railroad is to be built in the Lower Provinces, and for the most part paid for in the Upper Provinces; it is no matter that it would be most unjust to allow the eastern half of the Dominion to enjoy all the privileges and advantages of Confederation, and to compel the Western half to shoulder all the expense; notwithstanding all these things the imposition of the new tariff has created discontent in the east, and the hands of the anti-union party have been strengthened.

Let us look at the grievances set forth in the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Journals. First there is a petition from Halifax setting forth that there is a partial failure of the crops and fisheries in some parts of Nova Scotia, and a total failure in other places in the same Province. And therefore the petitioners protest against the imposition of a duty on corn, cornmeal, rye flour, and all articles of general consumption among the people. A Halifax Journal takes up the cudgels for West India trade, and objects that the tariff will keep out good West India rum and let in bad Canadian whiskey. It also objects that the West India sugar trade is ruined, and generally it opposes all the taxes the Dominion Parliament has imposed. The same journal bewails a decreased tax upon the rich man's brandy and wine, and increased tax upon the poor man's spirits, which of course is a manifest contradiction to the first objection. Another journal protests against the tariff because it discriminates between clothes lines and ratlins; the former paying 15 per cent. and the latter coming in free. Another journal from the same city is savage because the tariff came down with lightning rapidity. A journal from New Brunswick after finding fault with the tariff generally, growls at it particularly because it lets in wheat to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to suit Upper Canada. Another journal also from New Brunswick thinks the tariff hard to bear; but it believes Nova Scotia might shoulder it if a tax were placed upon the importation of United States coal into the Dominion. Another journal believes that the worst features of the tariff are the imposition of a duty of fifteen per cent. on printing paper and the postage tax.

These embrace the principal objections to the tariff in the Eastern Provinces, and it will be perceived that some of them are reasonable and others are unreasonable; some of them are based on good grounds, others are based on bad grounds and on misconceptions. With regard to the duty on breadstuffs, a great deal may be said against it. Corn laws will always be unpopular—even although the motives the Government have in view in imposing them may be good enough. But the demand for the putting on of a tax on United States coal is not wise. And the accusation that the tariff has been framed to favour Canadian whiskey or Canadian wheat is not true. Again if the tariff discriminates harshly against any particular industry, or against any particular trade, such as the West India trade; or if there is wide-spread distress in any portion of the Dominion; or if the difference in duty between ratlins and clothes lines is vexatious; all these things are susceptible of redress. Surely the people of the Lower Provinces know very well that this tariff is at best only temporary, and that a more suitable one will be framed when the Dominion Parliament next meets. In the meantime they can seek redress in a constitutional way, and no doubt they will find strong help in both Ontario and Quebec when the day of battle comes. For we can assure them that tariffs are just as unpopular in the West as in the East. And further we can assert that the people of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec have no desire to lay burthens on those of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Nor have they any object to gain by such a course. On the contrary, they know that since the one tariff will apply to the entire Dominion, if that tariff could be made light in the Eastern Provinces it would also fall lightly upon the Western Provinces. It is utter folly in the Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers to

imagine that Ontario and Quebec could derive any advantage by making them discontented. On the contrary, it is a fact that the people of Ontario and Quebec would rather lay additional burthens on themselves than create any hard feeling in the Lower Provinces which might in a moment be taken advantage of by the enemies of Confederation to the detriment of our New Dominion. We are glad to perceive that in the Lower Provinces there is a large and influential class who take a sensible view of the tariff and who will confine themselves to legitimate opposition, if they conscientiously believe that they ought not to be asked to submit to the tariff. Let this class continue to act moderately, and they will confer a benefit on the cause they advocate and the cause we all have at heart—the peace and prosperity of the Dominion.

THE CUNARD STEAMSHIPS.

THAT the Cunard line of steamships is the most successful one which ever plied between Europe and America, will be readily assented to by all unprejudiced persons. It was, therefore, with very much regret that the travelling public learned some time ago, that there was reason to fear that the Cunard Company were about to dispose of their admirable fleet, and withdraw from the Atlantic service. This was actually the case, and arose from the fact that their subsidy from the British Government has expired, and that the latter did not seem to be prepared to renew it. Without a subsidy, the Company determined they would withdraw their line altogether, and as the Imperial Government seemed bent, and did take steps, to effect a new arrangement with regard to the ocean postal service, preliminary negotiations for the sale of some of the Cunard fleet had already commenced. The offer made by the British Government was, that no steamship line should be subsidised, but that those lines which offered to perform the service, should receive the ocean postage as their remuneration. Three or four of the Steamship Companies, including the Inman, National Steam Navigation Company, and the Hamburg line, offered to take the mails on their sailing days on the conditions specified. The Cunard Company did not offer, and consequently the Saturday mails for America, by far the largest, could not have left Queenstown on Sunday, and would have had to lay over till Tuesday—a delay to which the business community of Britain would never have submitted to. This difficulty seems to have prevented this arrangement with the different steamship lines from being carried out, and whilst the Government officials were somewhat at a loss what to do—with the prospect before them of a stoppage of the present postal facilities—the Cunard Company came forward with the proposition that they would continue to perform the ocean postal service as formerly for a smaller subsidy—that of £80,000 per annum. This offer has been accepted by the Imperial Government for one year, and the public will be glad to know that the Cunard packets will cross the Atlantic during 1868 as formerly. From the position taken by the English Government, we judge that they will pay the subsidy no longer than they can perfect arrangements to accommodate the public on cheaper terms. This is certainly a sound position to take, and during the approaching year, we should not be surprised if, in conjunction with the American Government, arrangements were made to get the ocean postal service performed on the terms unsuccessfully proposed by the British Government a few weeks ago. In the meantime, we are glad that the Cunard steamships are to keep their accustomed place. They are a credit to the marine of the Mother Country, and a great convenience to European travellers.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

THE subject of compulsory education is one that might well find a place in the *Trade Review*, because the prosperity of a nation depends not only upon its trade and commerce, but upon the absence of crime, the establishment of law and order, and the creation of a sense of moral duties and obligations and rectitude among all classes of the community, the lowest as well as the highest. Compulsory education has had to contend not so much against solid arguments and serious objections as against fallacious reasoning and unreasonable prejudices. We are told that compulsion is opposed to the spirit of our constitution and the genius of our institutions; that the duty of the State is fulfilled when it provides the means of education, and that it is no part of its duty

to compel the public to take advantage of those means; that compulsion would be a species of despotism and interference with the liberty of the subject, and that such a law would be the precursor of Maine laws, sumptuary laws, and dear knows what else.

Well, what is there in any of these arguments or objections? Compulsion, be it remembered, would not be a terror or inconvenience to those parents and guardians who believe that education is as necessary for a child as support, and who act up to that belief; and these constitute nine-tenths of our population. The law would practically be felt—and that, too, beneficially—only by the poor, ignorant, and vicious classes who systematically neglect the education of their offspring, even when living under the very shadow of the free school-house. The law does not deal with classes—it speaks to the whole people; yet who objects that it says, "Thou shalt not steal?" Not the people who are honest certainly, but it may be the thief who is punished in not observing it. In the same way if education was made compulsory, it would not press upon the educated but upon the ignorant, and yet the chief opposition such a law will meet with will be from the educated classes.

It is a matter of wonder that the people will allow themselves to be taxed in a particular purpose, and that they will not insist upon that purpose being fully carried out; nay, further, that they will throw obstacles in the way of its being carried out. In Ontario, for instance, we have a heavy school tax. As the result of this costly school-houses are erected all over the land; great expense is gone to in furnishing those school-houses with books and maps and everything necessary, and then efficient masters at startlingly high salaries are engaged. And after all this expense has been gone to, and all these means provided for the moral and intellectual training of our youth, we are told that it would be wrong to compel them to take advantage of it—that such a course would be subversive of our free institutions and opposed to the spirit of our glorious constitution.

Now, would it really do violence to our institutions and our constitution if our juvenile pauper population, our street Arabs, and our mischievous urchins, who grow up in ignorance and vice, and ultimately graduate from the Reformatory to the Prison, from the Prison to the Penitentiary, and from thence too often to the gallows—would be a violation of our rights if this unfortunate class were rescued from such a future by the enactment of a law which would compel them to submit to school discipline and to acquire the means of growing up as ornaments to the State, instead of living and dying in disgrace, besides being a life-long source of expense to the community. We do not mean to assert, of course, that mere secular education will make a man morally good, or prevent him from degenerating into a criminal. Unfortunately it is too true that most of our cheats and swindlers belong to the educated classes. But at the same time it is an undoubted and most melancholy fact that there are in every city in the Dominion a great mass of poor uneducated childhood of both sexes, who grow up in the worst kinds of debauchery, lewdness, profanity, and godlessness, and who, from their youth to their grave, are nothing but drunkards loafers, vagabonds, and criminals.

This is the class that a compulsory law would be designed to reach; and who will contend that such an object is not good? Who will argue that it is right to allow any portion of society to grow up in ignorance and wickedness, and that it would be wrong to force them to become educated and respectable members of the commonwealth? If, then, compulsory education would not be morally wrong, it must be morally right; and in neglecting to enact a law to accomplish that purpose, are we not guilty of a blunder worse than a crime? The subject is one of the gravest importance. In England the force of circumstances long since compelled the wisest statesmen to accept the principle of compulsion as necessary, and there, in that constitutional country, there are factory and other acts on the statute book in which it is laid down that it is more important to educate the children of the poor, ignorant and labouring classes than to send them to factories to earn their daily bread. And surely if it is of more consequence to educate a child than to allow him to work, it is far more momentous to educate him than to allow him to grow up in idleness and vice. At the opening of the late assizes in Toronto, Judge Hagarty, in addressing the grand jury, dwelt strongly upon compulsory education, and gave some alarming statistics regarding the ignorant youth of that city,