

HON. T. D. MCGEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND FINANCIAL LEGISLATION.

MR. MCGEE dating from Paris, on the 1st instant, has issued an address to his constituents of Montreal West, setting forth his opinions concerning the true policy of the new Dominion of Canada on general and political questions. In it he refers more especially to four leading matters. I. "The increase and employment of our population." II. "The armament of our people." III. "The education of our people." IV. "The unification of our people."

We quote entire from the Address his treatment of the first two topics. We do not differ but in a very slight degree from Mr. McGee on the question of what support in framing the tariff shall be given to the great material interests of the country, qualified as his meaning is; and we most cordially agree with him on the necessity of such military preparations as shall enable us, now with the help of England, hereafter through the power and prowess of our own people, to preserve our independence and our nationality, no matter from whence attacks may come, and to attain a position amongst the nations of the world as high in a military sense as it will be in a commercial view, so soon as the royal proclamation calls into *bona fide* existence the new Dominion of Canada.

Thus writes Mr. McGee:—

I. As to any large increase of our population from the annual immigration to our shores, so long as the United States labour market remains in its present abnormal condition, it is not to be expected; on the contrary, the enormous inflation of nominal wages since the civil war, is draining us, both east and west, of much of our natural, native increase. It is all in vain you point out to these victims of self-illusion, that if wages have risen so has the cost of food, clothing, and all the necessities of life; that \$8 per day now is in reality no more to the American working man than one dollar before the war, for he can get no more with it. You cannot arrest an exodus of labour seeking the highest market, by explanations about gold and greenbacks, however clear and convincing. They must try their folly out, and a costly folly many who have tried, confess to have found it.

There are two powerful means towards the increase and employment of population in a new country like ours—namely, public works on a large scale, and legislation congenial to private enterprise.

The debts now due by the Provinces were chiefly contracted in borrowing capital for what they considered necessary public works. This has been sometimes made the reproach of our statesmen; not so much the principle itself as the abuses in the expenditure of the money borrowed. No economical principle can, perhaps, occupy more impregnable ground than that which gave us the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals and the Grand Trunk Railway; and it is hardly saying too much to assert that Montreal alone is so convinced of this truth, that she would willingly tax herself to-day for the whole cost of the structure rather than be deprived of the convenience of the Victoria Bridge. To extend to a second, or a third or several generations, obligations created for the construction of national public improvements, is a policy most equitable in itself; and so far from shrinking from an increase of our public debt, if incurred for the Intercolonial Railway, the canalization of the Ottawa, or the Bay Verte Canal, it seems to me every right-minded inhabitant of the new Dominion ought to call out loudly for such a policy. "Get the money on our account; but see that you give us value for it"—this ought to be the cry of every elector to his representative.

By "legislation congenial to private enterprise," I do not mean what is called protective legislation; but I do mean that arrangement of our tariff, which will not press unfavorably on our growing manufactures. In all the tariff discussions in the former Parliaments, from 1868 to 1896, I said what I thought to be right to this subject, and voted accordingly. A declaration it is true, was made last year by my colleague, Mr. Galt, in reply to Mr. Holton, that his then proposed reductions in the tariff were "steps in the direction of free trade"—or words to that effect. The reputation from Montreal, who did me the honour to wait on me at Ottawa during the debate, (under the chairmanship of Mr. Champion Brown) will remember that I told them frankly then and there "Mr. Galt had, in this particular, expressed only his personal opinion." I did not feel free to say more at that moment; but I now emphatically repeat that statement. Although I shall never consent to become the mouthpiece of a particular interest in Parliament, I am not one whit less desirous now than I was ten years ago to see our commercial legislation adjusted with every consideration for our domestic industry. But this industry in its widest range, it must be remembered, embraces not only manufactures properly so called, but the economy, too long neglected, of our forests; the exploitation of our mineral resources; the prices of fish; and the extension and diversification of our agriculture. In all these departments of industry, nature has placed the lever in our hands; if we are true to ourselves, there is no reason why the new Dominion (reaching only its former ratio of increase) should not commence the XXth century with an industrial and prosperous population of 12,000,000 of souls. May God send, for the sake of freedom, justice, and civilization, that our young men of to-day may live to see this glorious consummation!

II. Gentlemen, there is, under God, one means by which the necessary securities can be taken from time for the realization of these possibilities; it is the ar-

ment of our whole people. We are but sharing the common lot of all civilized communities in awakening to the stern fact, that in this age every State must have, or be in a position to have if needed, the military service of its every son. The last great revolution which marked the art of war,—the discovery of gunpowder,—resulted in standing armies, in the creation in every State of a class of soldiers, by trade or by profession. The new revolution ushered in by the invention of so many new repeating weapons—of so many hitherto unknown means of aggression, afloat and ashore—the systematic application of modern machinery to war—proclaims unmistakably to every people who would be free and secure on their own soil,—"Keep step with the times; arm your entire population; arm them with the best weapons; arm them at the earliest moment; no country is safe from insult and aggression in which every man does not feel called upon to bear arms in her defence!" This is the voice of the present, and it will be prolonged into the future. I respect and honour our volunteers for their noble self-sacrifice in the past; against mere marauders they were quite sufficient; but the days for mere volunteering are nearly, if not quite, over and gone.

PARIS EXHIBITION.

PARIS, May 1st, 1887.

DURING the last three weeks I have allowed my pen to remain idle, nor would I now resume it, were it not for my conviction that the "Palace of the world's fair," (if I may be allowed so to call the building in which the various Courts, or stalls of merchandise are situated) will be thoroughly complete, before this letter is received in Montreal. In this announcement, I wish it to be clearly understood, I do not include the Parks of the *Exposition Universelle*, which still present a chaotic mass of unfinished gardens and a series of buildings, many of which are now only in the course of erection. When these are all carried out, when they fully display the attractions we are promised that they shall hold out, this will be the most delightful portion of the whole exhibition. But the first of June (or even the fifteenth) will scarcely see the long expected Elysium arise in all its beauty, to invite by its charms, visitors from every part of the world. At the present moment we have, however, enough complete to enable us to draw a fair comparison between the nascent undertaking and those of a similar character that have gone before it, and the result is indeed favourable to the *Exposition Universelle*, since we can without fear of contradiction, declare that it will be superior to any that we have yet seen, and will probably live in history unexcelled by anything that may follow it. The magnitude of the enterprise may fairly be judged of, by the fact that it covers 480,000 square yards, besides the Island of Billancourt (reserved for machinery), and the quays, which are covered with temporary erections. Indeed there are very many cities which do not cover so large an area, while as to variety, we find, on referring to the official documents, that the exhibitors who here display their works of art, or produce of industry, amount to no less than 42,117 individuals, each of whom hopes to secure at least some minutes of your pleased attention. The number of sights to be seen, which we have just quoted, renders this fair hope illusive; since to view, even cursorily—were we only to examine moderately the works of art—the curiosities, the inventions brought under your view would at least take fifty visits of four hours duration each. The bodily fatigue of travelling over several miles of zigzag path, and continually turning passages is great. But it sinks into nothing when compared to the ever ensuing fresh objects which call for your attention, and which, following each other, as quickly as the scenes in an exhibition of dissolving views, leave a confused recollection of a splendid whole, from which memory can recall no one particular subject; the dazzled eye has drunk in far more than the mind can fairly digest, and thus all becomes confused in wondering admiration. You may, it is true, travel through the *Exposition Universelle* in a week. You may boast that you have seen all that is there shown. But you will really not know more of it than the railway traveller who hurries through an entire kingdom in an express train, for, like him, you may look around you—you may be pleased with the glance—but you will find it difficult to describe what you have there beheld, since you have only seen it like a passing dream, and, like that passing dream, forgotten it.

Were the foreign Courts separated—were the whole building divided into half a dozen parts—the visitors would be loud in their applause; with a short rest, a short repose between these visits, these Exhibitions would be hailed with delight. But to be called upon to take in, to examine and arrange in a few days, a display which, to seriously look over and pronounce upon, would take at least daily visits during two months, is a labour so great, so far beyond the power of a mere lover of pleasure—an ordinary sight-seer—that I much fear that true justice will never be done to this levithan undertaking.

Hitherto the French nation have far surpassed our countrymen in the organization. In England we initiate great and wondrous undertakings, but we are not generally considered to carry out the minor details as well as our Gallic neighbours. On the present occasion the case is reversed—a more noble and more splendid idea never was brought forth. But in the preliminary arrangements no project could have displayed a greater failure. The opening of the Exhibition before it was properly completed, was a *fiasco* brought about, I believe, by entering into contracts to take effect from a certain day long before it was ascertained that the work would or would not at that particular date be half ready for the reception of the public. An international Club was announced. That building is

still incomplete. The price of tickets were only fixed upon a day or two before the gates were thrown open, and now the catalogues, sold by the proprietors of the Exhibition to a monopolist for 24,000fr. (and subsequently farmed out by him), were so defective that they served no purpose save to mislead. The arrangement is so complicated and the information so incorrect (particularly in the department of the *Beaux Arts*) that it is not at all uncommon to find, as I did, No. 42, or some such number, a splendid picture representing a lady of considerable charms, a fine portrait, described in the catalogue as "A fearful shipwreck;" or a battle in the Crimea, designated as "A pretty kettle of fish;" and as all these faults are perpetuated and circulated by all the other guide-books, which are nothing more than literal translations of Mons. Dentu's official catalogue, the stalls of those who sell these misleading works are besieged all day by discontented purchasers, who have thus thrown away their money on worthless information. And yet this Mons. Dentu has the impudence to threaten his plagiarists with an action for damages for copying his "Will-o-the-Wisp" book, although he unfortunately himself took his information from the national commissioners sent here to regulate such matters. The monopolist of the advertising department within the palace is bringing charges against the British Commission who have allowed commercial announcements to be printed on their window blinds, and the contractor who pays for the right of supplying chairs is about to attack the coffee-house keepers for infringement of his right, by allowing their customers to sit gratuitously on their chairs outside their *cafés* while drinking their beer or sipping their *petite verre de Cognac*. Thus all is not *couleur de rose* within. All is not sunshine without. Yet in the face of these drawbacks, while contractors were squabbling, building slowly advancing, and a continuous storm of rain, no less than 150,000 visitors on Sunday last visited the *Exposition Universelle*, and seemed much pleased with all they saw. This one fact speaks volumes, and destroys the assertions of a thousand grumblers.

Having thus introduced your readers into the exhibition, I would fain give them in detail a full and exact account of the wonders contained within it, but for their sake as well as my own, I will withhold this initial account until this day week—before which I am assured we shall have a corrected catalogue to guide us—which is indeed necessary, since few or none of the foreign exhibitors remain in France—and as in many cases several stalls are superintended by one individual, who probably knows nothing of the varied goods committed to his charge, beyond the fact that they are of a particular class and that they belong to an absent tradesman, and lastly, that all the pretty things you see are for sale. But at what price or on what terms the deponent knoweth not. You can obtain little information from this individual.

To save, however, my reputation as a chronicler, I deem it my duty to give you a single glance at that wonderful exhibition, which I will hereafter endeavour to describe serially. The *Exposition* is approached by foot passengers from the opposite side of the River Seine by a magnificent flight of stone steps some forty feet wide, which lead from the *trocadero* to the bridge of Jena, and at the end of which the Avenue d'Honneur opens its gates. You then travel on over a fine road, covered in by richly ornamented canopies—so handsome that this beautiful protection has been forced to be removed and taken care of ever since the opening day—wind and rain having continually punished us since that date.

On the right hand is the English Garden or Park, in which is situated the international Club, several Chinese palaces and Oriental marquees, pavilions in which missionaries present, gratuitously, copies of St. Matthew, and sheds wherein extra machinery is displayed. Indeed, the ground is so closely dotted with these edifices, that its beauty as a garden, its picturesque character as a park, are lost.

On the left hand is the French portion of ground, and the same faults may be urged against it, in addition to the surprise created by seeing several buildings of a permanent character here erected. Some of these are, however, to be utilized. The light-house, for instance, is purchased and, at the closing of the Show, will be sent to a rock (the rock of Dover) in the neighbourhood of Jersey. Phot. graphers, photo-sculptors, galvanizers, and others, ply their trade here, while the Imperial Pavilion, the International Theatre, a mimic ruin and an hospital, cover the greensward, which should have been left to promenaders.

You enter the building through a balcony, which goes all around it, and in which almost all the *cafés* and *restaurants* are situated. The principal French establishments of this kind guard the left hand of the entrance, while Messrs. Spiers & Fowler attract many hundred daily to their establishment, not only to partake of their good fare, but to gaze upon ten or twelve fresh looking English girls who do the honours of the counter.

You then proceed between the portion of the building—alotted to France, on the one hand and to England and her Colonies on the other. But of the shawls, the embroideries, works of art, or the splendid china of Minton, the furniture and other elegancies which ask your attention to our Gallic neighbour, or to our superior machinery or the occasional glimpses we obtain of our showy glassware display—it is not my intention to speak. I will not even touch on the Court of Canada, where goods are daily developing their beauties, and where a superb collection of Geological Specimens are cleverly set forth, and a ground model to which I shall hereafter refer—called for my earnest attention—but leave all till the proper catalogue is supplied, and your excellent and active Commissioner, the Hon. Mr. McGee, is able enough to lend still more interest to the objects sent from Canada, by his clever description of them.

For the moment, I will sit down in the garden which occupies the centre of the Exhibition, and watch the labour of the workmen who are erecting a sort of summer house in which the Imperial Crown Jewels are to be placed.—*Correspondence of the Montreal Gazette.*