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When Conservative Journals advocate Imperial Federation and the independent protection of the Dominion, we may begin to see the line on which parties in Canada may soon be divided. We would prefer independence to either, but if a choice were necessary, we should prefer commercial union and resist Imperial Federation to the last.

This is the jubilee year of Canadian constitutional government as well as of Her Majesty's reign, and the surviving Upper Canada rebels of '37 propose holding a meeting at Toronto to celebrate the event. It is also proposed to raise a monument to Lount and Matthews, who were "legally but unrighteously" executed in that city fifty years ago for the crime of demanding in arms the liberties we now enjoy.

We have no desire in the world to repress the poetic aspirations of man, woman or child, but we must lay down certain rules which we hold absolutely. Those who write poetry for THE POST must know three things: (1) How to write. (2) How to spell. (3) The rules of grammar.

Whatever any one may say, a readjustment of representation is needed in this province. Mr. Mercer has justice and common sense on his side in the proposal he has made relating to this matter. The constituencies are very disproportionate. Montreal with 200,000 population has only three members, Laval with a population of 9,462 returns one member, and Ottawa County with a population of 39,432 returns only one.

The Ontario budget presented to the Assembly the day before yesterday is very easily understood. By it our readers will be able to appreciate the difference between Liberal and Conservative methods of government by comparing the financial condition of Ontario with Quebec. The gross receipts for 1886 amounted to \$3,149,000 and the gross expenditure \$3,182,000, showing a small deficit.

In The Mail's report of the proceedings of the Orange Grand Lodge of Ontario West, held last week at Toronto, the address by the Grand Master is included. In it occurs the following passages, which should stimulate the reflective faculties of all Catholic adherents of the Tory party:—

The election of a large number of brethren to both the Parliament of Canada and the Local Assembly is also a matter of congratulation. Their presence at this meeting will no doubt encourage you to continue on in the work, many of the brethren now around us on the occasion of this meeting are men of fine talents and of noble character.

Secession, Annexation, and the other names by which the opponents of good government were known, been successful. As it is now, the hand that has guided Confederation from its infancy will all control the ship of State, and long may he spared to do so.

WOMEN'S NERVE. Among the sorrowful details of the late terrible railway disaster on the Providence Railway which crowded the columns of many of our American exchanges, mention is made of the praiseworthy conduct of the train officials and those passengers who escaped. One of the most graphic accounts we have seen is that of an interview between a Mr. Pike and a New York Telegram reporter.

This testimony to woman's nerve, under circumstances peculiarly appalling, is not more pleasing than suggestive. "The women were fully as brave as the men." There are whole volumes in these few words. But, be it noted, they were "working women." None of your fine ladies who go off into hysterics at the sight of a spider or a mouse.

A PROPHECY OF PANIC. It seems an extraordinary thing that a financial authority should find reason to expect a monetary panic in the fact of there being too much money. Yet that seems to be the meaning of the alarming despatch from Washington lately published in our columns.

Between now and the 1st of July the Treasury will call about \$40,000,000 worth of bonds, the last of the three's outstanding. After that there will be no bonds in the payment of which the redundant revenue of the government can be used until 1891, when the four and one-half's will fall due.

EDWARD BLAKE. If there were any truth in the reported retirement of the Hon. Edward Blake from political life and the leadership of the Liberal party, the public may be assured that it would not be in the columns of disrespectful journals in the pay of the Ministry at Ottawa that the announcement would be made.

office, and now turn round, and shoulders hinging on a falsehood of their own invention, and whine their regrets in this fashion:— "There is a rumour afloat, which we fear is not altogether without foundation, that Mr. Blake has serious thoughts of resigning his position as leader of the Liberal party. Mr. Blake's withdrawal from the field of active politics we look upon as a misfortune, not only to the Liberal party, but to the people of the whole Dominion. There may be more skillful tacticians among Canadian statesmen than Mr. Blake, men more pliable and more ready to adapt themselves to the varying circumstances of the hour, but there is no public man in Canada of finer intellect, of greater breadth of view, more upright and more honorable. He is one of the very few men whose odor of honor is the same in public as in private life.

There are occasions when language fails to supply adequate terms wherewith to properly characterize the meanness of which human nature is capable, and this is one of them. It is satisfactory, however, to know that Mr. Blake has no intention of retiring. The rumor has been stated in the interest of the clique to whom his name is a terror. The wish was doubtless father to the thought. Mr. Blake has striven nobly to redeem his country from the grasp of a corrupt Government. But— "What can Cato do against a world, a base, degenerate world, which counts the votes, and how the neck to Caesar?"

THE QUEBEC LEGISLATURE. The speech by the administrator at the opening of the Quebec Legislature yesterday, which will be found elsewhere in this issue, is a highly interesting document. A perusal of it will show under what grave difficulties the Mercer Ministry has assumed the Government of the Province and how necessary it is that the new managers of affairs should have fair and ample opportunity for carrying their policy into effect.

The explanation given of the financial condition of the Province must convince the most ardent partisan of the late Government that the change of Ministry has taken place not a day too soon. Indeed it appears evident that had the Government remained in Liberal hands from the time of Mr. Joly, the Province would not be in its present deplorable state of financial denudation, borrowing to preserve the public honor and credit would not be necessary, and the most valuable assets of the Province would not have been alienated without visible proceeds.

No more scathing comment on the conduct of Tory Government in Quebec could be imagined than the admitted fact that when it passed out of existence the treasury was found swept bare of the last cent, and future revenue hypothecated by charges imposed, it would seem, with the very wantonness of reckless extravagance.

The late Government when they passed their late Railway Subsidies Act, by which land grants were made commutable into money, must have been aware of the financial difficulties in the way, and though we are not inclined to find fault with a generous railway policy, we look for prudence and reasonable foresight in its prosecution. In this respect the late Government was to blame, for though they persisted to the last that they had a surplus, they cannot now pretend ignorance of the actual state of the Provincial finances.

However, as the four original provinces of the Dominion are in the hands of Liberal Governments, the movement for revision can be pressed with promise of success. Since federal encroachments on provincial rights have become a great danger, the necessity for clearly defining the spheres of federal and provincial authority has become absolute.

Furthermore, as the Governor's speech already indicates, the conditions under which the provinces entered Confederation twenty years ago have undergone a complete change. While the revenues they surrendered to the Dominion have increased enormously, they have received a partial and, at times has shown, a wholly inadequate subsidy. At the same time the expense of maintaining local institutions has multiplied.

But had the recent Federal elections turned out differently, it is safe to say that the proposition advanced by Mr. Mercer would meet with a quick response from a Liberal Government at Ottawa, and the difficulties which beset the administration of public affairs and which unfortunately will continue while Sir John remains in power, would soon be obviated. The policy of the Dominion Premier has been clearly defined by his actions, and we have his own confession of dislike for federation and preference for a legislative union. That policy is to reduce the provinces to a condition of absolute dependence on Ottawa and render the constitution unworkable.

Nevertheless we believe that quiet and determined action on the part of the provinces, in the way suggested by Mr. Mercer, backed by a strong movement in the House of Commons, would compel the Federal Government to come to an understanding for a revision of the constitution. It is evident that existing Canadian institutions of government are tentative. They cannot be called fixed or regarded as permanent in any sense, nor are they calculated to resist the strain that must soon come upon them in the face of impending, inevitable complications.

The frank, perspicuous statement of provincial affairs contained in the Governor's speech will confirm public confidence in the Mercer Government. The people now know pretty accurately how they stand, what difficulties have to be met, how it is proposed to meet them, and we are sure it is the general desire that the new Government should have no unnecessary obstacles thrown in their way while endeavoring to rescue the province from the unfortunate condition in which they found it.

POLITICAL ETHICS. All men admit that there are certain principles in politics which must be observed, or great evils to the State are sure to ensue. Modern scientific study of history has established beyond question a natural law in ethics, which is only a confirmation by human reason of teachings that have come down from remote antiquity. But in an age of rampant materialism, when success is regarded as the great criterion, men are apt to imagine that so long as the immediate object sought has been gained, the future may take care of itself.

Views like these may seem old-fashioned and obtrusive to those who, in the conflict of parties, look for nothing but immediate success in their undertakings, but where is the man in Canada to-day who does not in his heart hold the exalted purity of Edward Blake's character in higher estimation than the cunning of Sir John Macdonald, though the one was less successful at the polls than the other? The tributes now paid to Mr. Blake by the ministerial press, on the presumption that he was contemplating retirement from political life, bring into lurid contrast the character and conduct of the man opposed to him.

But while Mr. Blake's nobility of character is thus admitted by his opponents, it is impossible not to notice their ill-concealed joy at the prospect of his abandonment of a position where they have the greatest reason to dread his presence. An administration comprising men who have long since divested themselves of the faintest pretences to honesty would like nothing better than that a great and good man should no longer impeach them before the people whom they have debauched

with bribes and depraved with the bad example of successful iniquity. Conservative organs are counting on a majority in Parliament which they hope will be sufficiently subservient to condone any of the usual enormities of Macdonaldite misrule. But, though this is not a reformed parliament by any means, it is a considerable improvement on its immediate predecessor. Unfortunately some of the most notorious Boedlers have been re-elected, showing a wretched state of public morals in the constituencies which have chosen such representatives. But the wedge of disintegration has been driven deep into the Ministerial party, and it is not at all improbable that, when the time comes, combinations will be discovered of which there are no surface indications at present.

COMMERCIAL UNION.

Public opinion is rapidly maturing in regard to the trade relations of Canada and the United States. It is left by commercial men on both sides of the line that the enormous interests involved should be placed on some well understood, permanent basis. Business people recognize the commercial element of the problem now pressing for solution, but it is in a politico-economical sense that real troubles exist. Hostile tariffs adopted by both countries have developed the commerce of the continent on different lines, and no arrangement, however apparently advantageous for the future, can be considered without reference to existing conditions and interests established under a deliberately adopted policy uniformly pursued for a number of years.

Canadians, like Americans, are divided in opinion as to what the exact nature and scope of the proposed commercial treaty should be. While some advocate a limited reciprocity confined to raw material and natural productions, others go much further and propose the almost total abolition of the Customs line and the negotiation of a treaty of commercial union. The question is being very fairly and ably discussed by the press of both countries, all parties showing a desire to arrive at a clear conception of what would be the best for all concerned.

The views of American advocates of reciprocity are pretty clearly defined, we presume, in the bill introduced into Congress by Mr. Butterworth of Ohio. The preamble of the proposed measure recites that unfortunate controversies have arisen, and still exist, between Canada and the United States; and that in view of the contiguity of the two countries, and the similarity of interests of the two peoples, the United States is desirous of removing all grounds of controversy and promoting commercial intercourse between the two countries, and harmony between the two governments.

How the objects here mentioned are to be attained is unfolded in the enacting clauses of the bill which are as follows:—

Section 1. Whenever and as soon as the Government of the said Dominion of Canada shall by act of her parliament permit all articles of trade and commerce of whatever nature or kind, whether the product of the soil or the waters of the United States, or manufactured articles, live stock of all kinds and its products, mineral or coal, the products of the mines of the United States, to enter the ports of the said Dominion of Canada free of duty, then all articles manufactured in Canada, and all products of the soil and water, and all minerals and coal, the product of the mines of the said Dominion of Canada, and all other articles of every name and description produced in said Dominion of Canada, shall be permitted to enter the ports of the United States free of duty, it being the intention of this act to provide for absolute reciprocity of trade between the two countries as to all articles of whatever name or nature produced in the same countries respectively.

Section 2. When it shall be certified to the President of the United States by the proper officials of the Government of the said Dominion of Canada that the said last mentioned Government by act of Parliament has authorized the admission into the ports of the said Government of all articles of trade and commerce produced in the United States free of duty, the President shall make proclamation thereof, and shall likewise proclaim that all articles produced in the said Dominion of Canada shall be admitted into all the ports of the United States free of duty so long as the said Dominion of Canada shall admit the products of the United States, as herein provided for, into her ports free of duty.

Section 3. The secretary of the treasury is hereby authorized, with the approval of the President of the United States, in connection with the proper officials of the Government of the said Dominion of Canada, to make rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this act, and to protect the said respective Governments against the importation of foreign goods through either into the other, and the secretary of the treasury of the United States shall furnish to the customs officers of the United States such rules and regulations for the purpose of guiding them in the discharge of their duties in respect of the protection of each of the said governments against improper importation of foreign goods as herein contemplated.

There is nothing half and half about those clauses. Practically they mean absolute free trade between Canada and the United States, customs union against the outside world. Commercial union, in fact, on so broad a basis that the Dominion would become a part of the United States and soon become politically identified with them. Many persons will, therefore, regard Mr. Butterworth's bill as annexation in disguise. But, however desirous many Canadians may be to share in the commercial prosperity that would undoubtedly ensue from unrestricted trade with the United States, there are some very serious obstacles in the way. Our revenue is principally derived from customs duties, and our obligations are such that for a long period to come all the money that can be raised in that way will be needed for purposes of government. It is calculated that about two-fifths of our imports are from the United States, all the duties on which would be lost to the Dominion while undoubtedly benefiting the importers and consumers. Our present Ottawa rulers would hardly view with satisfaction a reduction of income amounting to at least eight millions of dollars a year. The difficulty, however, is not in

superable it were entered upon in the right spirit. The principal objection to so extensive a scheme of reciprocity would probably come from Canadian manufacturers, who, presumably, would be unable to cope with the enormous capital and perfected facilities of American competitors. But it is well that the whole subject should be discussed in all its bearings, for it is plain that a change must be made in the commercial relations of the two countries before long.

ROCKS AHEAD.

When the law fails to punish crime in America it often happens that the individuals aggrieved or the community outraged by the miscarriage of justice find a swift and deadly means for vindicating their rights. So often has this been the case that a sentiment has grown up and has become largely recognized by public opinion, which acquits those who take the law in their own hands when the proper tribunals fail in their duty. It is from this lack of confidence in the machinery of justice which has led to the establishment of the Law and Order League, and those numerous associations for the protection of women, minors, immigrants, and others whose wrongs would go unredressed were there not organized societies to give effect to the public sense of justice. To the observer of the workings of social forces, this is a very distinct advance towards anarchy, and seems to justify Prince Kropotkin's conclusion that "the last word in the Gospel of Liberty is anarchy." Deeply as we must all deplore a state of affairs so dangerous to the public welfare, we must not shrink from contemplating it. It is our duty to ascertain its cause and point out the remedy. It is a fearful thing when public confidence in the just administration of the law of the land has been shaken. Doubt, uncertainty, confusion, result, and men who feel their rights insecure, as well as those who fancy they can obtain immunity for wrong doing, take to open violence or secret villainy to achieve their purposes. When society has reached this condition life and property become insecure, and great social disturbances must be looked for. Revenge has been called a sort of wild justice, but when a man shoots down another in open court, as reported by telegraph to-day, and walks free with public applause and approval, there must be something radically wrong in the institutions of the State where such action is possible.

But this is only the social side, for the person thus summarily punished was charged with an abominable crime against a child. It was doubtless the feeling that the ordinary law was a legate which prompted the girl's brother to kill the villain on the spot. The same spirit prevails the political world. When governments trample on the rights of the people, and men entrusted with the discharge of functions involving the liberties of the people, deliberately thwart the popular will by legal or other quibbles, they render themselves obnoxious to this spirit. And when such conduct is repeated and becomes a scandal and danger, there is every reason to dread violent reprisals. It was this sort of official defiance which planted the seeds of revolution, and which led in many countries to these terrible convulsions which sent crowns and heads rolling in the dust, destroyed all government and filled the nations with blood and terror. Having learned this lesson from history, and knowing what human nature is capable of doing under provocation, it is with a deep feeling of misgiving that we vote ominous allusions in the press to the necessity for forming extrajudicial associations to detect and punish electoral outrages.

In the recent elections several seats were stolen from the Opposition by partisan returning officers and others entrusted with the duty of carrying out the law. The case of Queen's, N.B., is the most notorious. Chateauguay was even worse, but the Government were afraid to take advantage of so palpable an injustice. Doubtless they calculated that by making a show of fair dealing in that instance they could insist all the more plausibly in holding other seats obtained by similar methods. But the partisan Returning officer is a creation of Sir John Macdonald's. Mr. Mackenzie's election law deprived the Government of the power of appointing their own creatures. But when Sir John forced the Gerry-mender act through Parliament, he introduced a clause at the tail of it giving the Government the right to appoint whomsoever they pleased to act as returning officers, instead of sheriffs and registrars, as was imperative under Mr. Mackenzie's act. There is, therefore, good reason to believe that something like conspiracy against the people obtained between ministers and the persons appointed in several constituencies to act as returning officers.

Quite naturally this belief has raised a fierce spirit in those whose rights and liberties have been invaded. And when a great party in the country has become convinced that the ballot no longer affords a means of redress, and that the Government is prepared to resort to fraud, a time has arrived when men must seriously consider what means of redress will be the most speedy and effective. The destruction of public confidence in the administration of the common or the statutory law is an incalculable misfortune to the country; but, great as that misfortune may be, it is infinitely less than the destruction of confidence in the source of law. This is the danger that now menaces Canada. Sir John, in his eagerness to retain power, has gone to lengths that can only be described as unendurable by those who suffer thereby. The cloud is visibly rising, and the storm may burst at any moment. Let us hope that it may not exceed constitutional bounds.