

the cheaper Canadian food products, while Canada is an independent neighbour, it is evident that the fact of this country entering the Union would not save those farmers from such a disaster. Canada, annexed, would still have all the advantages enumerated by Senator Higgins. It would therefore be unkind and selfish in the extreme for Canadians to take advantage of the kind-heartedness of those generous American politicians who invite them to enter the Union, with a patriotic self-forgetfulness which recalls Artemus Ward's readiness to sacrifice all his wife's relations in the war of the rebellion. Our people could not be so heartlessly selfish as to accept such generosity, to the ruin of their next-door neighbours. It is bad enough for them to be now destroying the internal carrying trade of the United States, in spite of all tariff and other obstacles, by carrying the goods of their people at lower rates than their own roads can afford. But to enter right into the Republic and carry on the competition with all the advantages of citizenship so generously proffered, would be too ungrateful. Sooner than expose themselves to the suspicion of selfishness so base, they will, no doubt, prefer to "be left," in the words of the eloquent Senator, "to work out their own destiny upon the continent, free," not only "from entanglement with the interest, the influences, or the conflicts of Europe," but also from those of other nations on their own continent.

In a recent report of a meeting of the City Council, one of the Councillors, who had just returned from an European tour, is represented as saying that he had been converted to a belief in the gravitation system of water supply, by what he had seen while abroad. Either there was some serious deficiency in the report, or this is a most remarkable confession. It would not be easy to make a more elementary and obvious remark in relation to the subject, than to say that the whole question of the relative merits of gravitation and pumping is one of local conditions. No one, we suppose, would be so unreasonable as to deny that, given an ample supply of water, of satisfactory quality, at a suitable elevation, and within a reasonable distance, the gravitation system is the one approved by economy and common sense. To elevate the water for a city by artificial means, when nature had already provided an elevated reservoir near at hand, would be folly too gross and palpable to be attributed to even the most abused alderman. The real questions for Toronto are those of quality, quantity, and cost. If there is any room for doubt in regard to either of these points, the only wise course is to be guided by the advice of skilled engineers. We have yet to learn that any engineer of repute has pronounced in favour of Lake Simcoe as the future source of supply for Toronto. Our own able engineer has, as we all know, given his opinion to the contrary without hesitation or ambiguity.

If any backing of Engineer Keating's opinion was wanting, it has now been supplied by Mr. Thos. C. Keefer, who, in a recent interview with a *Mail* reporter, pronounced the Lake Simcoe scheme "entirely chimerical and foolish." The water of Lake Simcoe is, he says, distinctly inferior to that of Lake Ontario. It is extremely doubtful if the city could obtain permission to use it. If it used it, the level of the lake would be lowered to the damage of the mills. The company or the city taking it, would be exposed to actions for indemnification for losses sustained by the Severn millers. The supply, too, would be far from unlimited. In all these points Mr. Keefer's opinion coincides with that of our own city engineer. The only material difference, so far as we have observed, is that the former believes in the possibility of constructing conduits which will be perfectly water-tight, across the bay, thus making the expense of tunnelling unnecessary. Surely, in view of such a consensus of opinion on the part of those best qualified to give opinions of value, it is time that our Council dismissed the gravitation scheme from their thoughts and proceeded to determine the question as between the proposed tunnel and the putting in of a new and reliable conduit. The former has the advantage that when once constructed we should all know the city to be permanently safe from danger of wholesale poisoning through the medium of its water-supply, a security that can never be felt by thoughtful citizens so long as the water used for drinking and domestic purposes has to be brought through the sewage-laden liquid which now fills the bay.

Some of the Conservative papers to the contrary notwithstanding, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the warmth of the reception which has everywhere in the West been given to Mr. Laurier and his speech-making companions does indicate more or less of a reaction in favor of the gospel of free trade which he proclaims. No one can mistake the political meaning of his tour. It is, in its inception and in its progress, a propaganda of Liberalism, and just now freer trade is the war-cry of Canadian Liberalism. That being so, the spirit of partyism must have been tamed and transformed to a much greater degree than we have yet dared to hope, if the adherents of the Government party and policy can allow their desire to show courtesy to the Opposition leader as a distinguished visitor, or even to listen to his charming oratory, to cause them to forget the interests of their party. That part they have taken in his welcome and their countenance of his addresses, can hardly be accounted for apart from some sympathy with his views, or some hesitancy in regard to the policy which it is his special mission to destroy. It is noteworthy, too, that at least two observers who have lately visited the Maritime Provinces, Mr. Osborne Howes, who writes

for the *Boston Herald*, and Mr. Dalton McCarthy, agree in affirming that, if the present state of public feeling continues until the next election, the tariff-reform party bids fair to carry the day in the Eastern sea-board provinces.

But even if we suppose the policy of tariff-reform which the Dominion Opposition leaders are now so vigorously pushing to prevail in both the West and the East, and in Ontario as well, it by no means follows that Mr. Laurier and his political associates will be called to the Government benches at Ottawa. Unfortunately for their prospects, there is an intervening province which has often in the past turned the balance, and which is likely often to do so in the future. And just now there is another question in Canadian politics which, in French-speaking Quebec, undoubtedly overshadows the tariff question. We mean, of course, the Manitoba school question. It is impossible to suppose that Mr. Laurier's somewhat Delphic pronouncement upon this question can satisfy either those who are strongly in favor of the Manitoba school law or those who regard that law as the essence of injustice to Roman Catholics. And yet it is by no means unlikely that, as we have intimated, upon this question may turn the fortunes of war in the next great contest. It is true that Sir John Thompson and his colleagues have not stated their position in regard to this matter any more definitely than their opponents. But the history of the past is in their favour. So will be, it is not unlikely, the influence of the prelates whose opinions have the force of law with most of their religious adherents. Perhaps it is more the misfortune than the fault of Mr. Laurier that this question is at the front just now. We do not know that it is even morally obligatory upon the leader of an Opposition to declare beforehand his policy in regard to such a question. To do so may be to deliver himself into the hands of his enemies, especially if those enemies have skilfully avoided committing themselves. But even though the Opposition Leader may be convinced that a frank declaration on the question is not demanded as a matter of duty or of policy, it is questionable whether it would not have been better for him to have said so plainly, than to have resorted to what, begging his pardon, can hardly be regarded by those most deeply interested otherwise than as an attempt at evasion.

However impossible it may be to obtain reliable information as to the relative losses of the two fleets in the recent naval engagement between the Chinese and Japanese, in the Korean Sea, there can be no doubt as to the terribly destructive nature of the battle. As the first great sea-fight under modern conditions, the details of the contest are being studied with intense interest by the