

against a single sod being turned towards its construction. The case however will be widely different when it is settled that the Intercolonial Railway is to be constructed. The whole Province will justly urge its immediate completion, and all parties will agree that it is essential to our future welfare. Whether all parties will agree that every detail, all the patronage and the universal power which is attached to the "successful promoters" of a great railway scheme, shall remain vested in the present Government or not, is quite another question. Whether the people will or will not leave such important matters in the hands of men, who, for the sake of one vote have played a double and unfair political game, we cannot at present prophesy. They have the example of Canada before them. The historian of "*Eighty years progress*" alludes with biting eloquence to the baneful effects of political influence on the construction of the "Grand Trunk Railway." The many subterfuges and evasions on railway questions in this Province are still fresh in the memory of the public. Is it possible then, that the future liabilities of the Province are to be left in the untrammelled hands of men so undeserving of public approbation as the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY and his colleagues. We allow men of both parties to represent us in Canada. Why in the name of common sense cannot a Committee, composed of members of both parties be made responsible for the construction of our railway. The only possible object which can be obtained by leaving this power as heretofore in the hands of the Government is an increase of power to that Government, and the probable augmentation of the public debt. If the details of railway construction are left in the hands of the Government, the Government has the power of injuring the Province to suit its private ends. Whether it will do so or not, we cannot now say. Looking back at what it has recently done, we are forced to the conclusion that such an event is possible if not probable. Let us hope that this temptation to evil doing may be removed once and forever beyond the reach of the men in power, for after all, the temptation is a great one man is weak, and the members of the Government are not above the common frailties of humanity.

THE LAW IN NOVA SCOTIA.

There are perhaps no subjects whereon the great mass of mankind evince so general an interest as upon subjects connected with the administration of the law. Men of every profession and rank in life, take as a rule more interest in legal matters than in any other matter without the actual business of their daily lives. Hamlet, quotes the "law's delay" as one of the most galling trials to which a fretful man can be subjected, and up to the present hour the "majesty of the law" is an expression familiar to us all. For one schoolboy that can accurately define the leading features of the Great Charter signed at Runnymede, there are fifty who can glibly narrate the incidents connected with Judge GASCOIGNE'S commitment of Prince HAL for contempt of Court. Those, whose ideas regarding Ship money and the Grand Remonstrance may be somewhat confused, are nevertheless perfectly at home as to the treatment of King CHARLES in Westminster Hall. Many who have never troubled their heads about the parentage of the indiscreet woman who joined hands with the last of the GEORGES, are yet fairly informed as to the evidence adduced against Queen CAROLINE. No public library, worthy the name, is without those interesting volumes which embody the State Trials, a perusal of which is almost imperative upon such as wish to study English history aright. Indeed, there can be little doubt, that the study of the procedure of law courts, has in all ages found favor with civilized men, and such study has been turned to more account

than almost any other. Dramatists and novelists have worked out some of their best conceptions with reference to the complications of the law. In "Measure for Measure," SHAKESPEARE founds his plot upon the result of a violation of law; the most vigorous speech uttered by SHYLOCK, is addressed to a legal tribunal; one of the most spirited scenes of HENRY VIII. is that wherein Queen KATHARINE pleads her righteous cause; the celebrated apology of OTHELLO is delivered before the Venetian "Council of Ten;" in the most read of MASSINGER'S plays, the interest culminates where Sir GILES OVERREACH is legally outwitted by means of a blank parchment. And, quitting the drama,—which truly represents "the very age and body of the time,"—we find that fiction writers, both past and present, use the law as a wide field for the scope of narrative power. FIELDING, in his inimitable satire "Jonathan Wild," makes the incurrance of the extreme penalty of the law the most triumphant finale of human greatness. In one of the most popular of BULWER'S early novels, the part best remembered is the celebrated defence of Eugene Aram, when on his trial for murder. Few books have earned a wider popularity than WARREN'S "Ten thousand a year," the greater portion of which is almost entirely devoted to law proceedings. The most popular portion of "Pickwick," is that which so humourously caricatures a trial for breach of promise; in "Bleak House," again, we have an interminable chancery suit; the scene of "Little Dorrit" is laid in the once notorious Marshalsea. We must, therefore, perforce, conclude that the Anglo Saxon race attaches very great importance to the law and its belongings, and we have no reason to suppose that the people of this Province are at all behindhand in this respect. Yet, if we are informed aright, we have no legally appointed Law Reporter, and are solely dependent upon the press for such scanty details of legal information as are accorded us from time to time. If the proceedings of the City Council are so important as to necessitate the employment of a paid Reporter, why should not the proceedings of the Supreme Court be dealt with in a like manner? Without in any way wishing to disparage the civic body, we are of opinion that the issues brought under its consideration are in nowise as important as those submitted to the judgment of the Supreme Court. The Mayor, and Aldermen, have at times to deal with questions of no mean importance, but they never incur the terrible responsibility accorded to a Judge and twelve jurors. It is one thing to send a man to Rockhead for ninety days, but it is something more to be invested with the power of condemning a fellow creature to death, or penal servitude for life. It is not only the general public that suffers from being kept in the dark regarding the proceedings of the Supreme Court; members of the legal profession are also deeply interested in this question. Let us suppose, for sake of illustration, that an important case has been decided in the Supreme Court, and that, upon the various issues evolved in such a case, arise nice questions concerning the legitimacy of queries propounded by Counsel;—what guarantee have our leading lawyers as to the establishment in our Courts of any important legal precedent? They cannot under the present system quote save from memory, or from private memoranda, and any such quotations might very properly be pooh-poohed. It is not indeed probable that any one of our Judges would urge one opinion to-day, and a totally different opinion six months hence, but were such to prove the case, it would be no easy matter, as things are at present, to fix upon him a charge of inconsistency. A lawyer might, on the strength of an expression judicially dropped, undertake a client's case, only to find that such an expression might be judicially ignored. We can recall an anecdote which bears indirectly upon this very important

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