

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

A RECENT article in the *Mail* calls attention to a matter which threatens, unless a remedy can soon be devised, to affect very seriously the stability of the Confederation. We refer to the seeming inadequacy of the constitutional arrangement for providing revenues for Provincial purposes. Every one of the Provinces originally forming the Confederation, with the exception of Ontario, is not only already seriously in debt, but seems likely to fall further behind year by year. A public debt is a very doubtful blessing at the best, whatever theorists may demonstrate to the contrary. But in ordinary cases, such as that of the Dominion, there is always the hope that the borrowed money, judiciously expended in constructing public works, improving means of communication, etc., may so stimulate trade and industry as to bring, eventually, an increase of revenue more than sufficient to meet the increased expenditure in the shape of interest on the money borrowed. In the case of the Provinces no such hope can be entertained. Their incomes are so nearly fixed that any increase that may result from growth of population, according to the *per capita* arrangement, or from other sources, is too slight to be worth taking into the account. Viewed in the light of experience, the arrangement which limits the Provinces in this way to a certain sum from the Dominion exchequer seems peculiarly objectionable. It has already led, as every one knows, to more than one modification of the original terms of union, and there is great reason to fear that it may give rise at an early day to fresh demands, which cannot be granted to one Province without causing serious dissatisfaction in others, especially in Ontario, which, owing partly, we suppose, to its superior natural resources, and partly to its admirable municipal system, is in a solvent and a prosperous condition. It is evidently high time that the friends of the Confederation in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces were earnestly looking about for a safe and practicable way out of the difficulty. Residents of Ontario are naturally prone to suggest the organization of municipal systems to provide for local expenses; in the way so successfully followed in this Province; but those who are acquainted

with circumstances and habits of thought in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces see clearly that a resort to any system savouring of direct taxation would be very unpopular, and would, in all probability, fan the still smouldering embers of dissatisfaction with Confederation into a dangerous and possibly destructive blaze.

IS there not a more feasible and less hazardous way in which the eastern Provinces may save themselves and the Dominion from the threatened embarrassment? We certainly mean no disparagement of the municipal system. On the contrary, we regard it as the only logical and complete method of carrying self-government to its legitimate issue. Local control of local expenditures and local taxation for such expenditures is an arrangement so simple and so obviously just that it must eventually prevail in all countries having free institutions and public-spirited populations. But there are in this case, undoubtedly, in some of the Provinces concerned at least, obstacles of various kinds which only time can remove, and which render it imperatively necessary to have present recourse to some other means of meeting the impending danger. A glance at the situation reveals the fact that there are at least two modes of retrenchment open to the Maritime Provinces, one of which is available also for Quebec, whose adoption would go far towards solving the problem. Let all the Provinces do away with their expensive and unnecessary Legislative Councils, and let the Maritime Provinces in addition merge their three legislatures with their costly and superfluous machinery into one. We make no claims to originality. These are no new reforms. Both have already influential advocates in the Provinces affected, and efforts, hitherto unhappily abortive, have been from time to time made for the accomplishment of both. We, therefore, shall be deemed guilty of no impertinence in urging them afresh upon the attention of all concerned. They might not suffice to effect the whole reduction of expenses required, but the fact of their adoption would be the best possible prelude to an appeal for a subsequent reconstruction of the financial basis of union, should such be found to be still absolutely necessary. Any objections that might have been at one time urged against the adoption of the single-chamber system on the ground of danger from hasty and ill-considered legislation, can be best answered by reference to the twenty-one years' record of the Ontario Assembly. Exception may be taken to some of the political methods and partizan tactics of the Ontario Government, but such charges are not peculiar to a Government dealing with a single chamber, and so do not touch the question under consideration. That question is simply whether the statutes passed by the Ontario Legislature have been on the whole less wisely conservative where conservatism was desirable, and whether they have not been more boldly progressive, where innovation was needed, than those of any other Province. Similar questions may be safely put, too, in reference to Manitoba, if due allowance be made for circumstances and conditions. The other reform alluded to bears its recommendation on its very face. No argument can be needed to show that the maintenance of all the machinery of three separate parliaments for the small population and compact territory of the Maritime Provinces is a legislative extravagance bordering on the absurd. All thoughtful Canadians in every Province must heartily wish for the success of the efforts which are being put forth in Quebec and at the seaside for the accomplishment of these most reasonable and much-needed reforms.

STRONG individuality is no less essential in a people than in a person to the accomplishment of any high purpose in the world. A nation is not necessarily the worse and may be very much the better for being to some extent composite. The history of Great Britain and of the English-speaking races the world over bears witness to the strength that results, not only from a healthful admixture of blood, but from the incorporation of distinct races as factors of one great national whole. But such a result can accrue from the coming together of immigrants of various races and creeds in a new land only as the different race elements become bound together and, to a certain extent, fused into one, by the operation of a common patriotic feeling and purpose. One of the chief hindrances to the

development of a Canadian national spirit has hitherto been the tendency, natural enough no doubt, and for a time inevitable, on the part of those who have come hither from various motherlands to regard themselves rather as transplanted sections of the old stocks, than as fully identified with the institutions and aspirations of this new Western land, and partakers of a new type of life, distinctively Canadian. Hence it has sometimes seemed almost as if the perpetuation of the St. Andrew's, St. George's, St. Patrick's and other national societies were inimical rather than otherwise to the development of a true Canadian feeling. It is evident that the growing strength of this nationalist sentiment in French Canada is to-day the most serious menace to Canadian unity. It may be, however, that the manifestation of this very tendency, greatly as it is to be deprecated for its own sake, will prove useful in arousing the members of other branches of the Canadian family to a sense of their common danger and binding them more closely in the bonds of a common patriotism. The following words of Rev. Principal Grant, in his recent address before the Montreal Caledonian Society, are not only a fitting rebuke to those who are so industriously sowing the seeds of division and disintegration in French and British Canada, but indicate the spirit in which all loyal Canadians, of whatever race, should unite to avert the danger: "On us and on them [the Canadian French] alike is one sacred obligation. We must be more than Frenchmen; more than Scotchmen. We must be Canadians. There can be only one Canadian nation, and all the races that have made Canada their home must contribute to its making. Dreams of anything else are folly and attempts to realize these dreams treason. Against treason all true Canadians must unite."

THE steady flow of population from rural districts and small towns to the cities has become a somewhat hackneyed theme. In many other parts of the civilized world the same tendency is displayed. The cities are steadily growing larger while the rural population remains at a standstill, or even grows less. The fact may be regrettable, but to deplore it is useless. In the course of time natural laws may bring about a reaction. In the meantime the social philosopher should devote his energies to the improvement of existing conditions. Without theorizing on the primary causes of this movement cityward it may be worth while to point out to how large an extent it is responsible for the much-talked-of "exodus" from Canada to the United States. The thousands of young men who have left our farms and villages to push their fortunes on "the other side" have not gone to till farms or to identify themselves with small centres of population in the Eastern States. We venture to say that the number who have done so is as insignificant as the number of Americans to be found on the farms and in the small towns of Canada. The emigration of our countrymen has been to the cities. Boston is the Mecca to which the bulk of Maritime Province pilgrims make their way; Buffalo, Detroit, and other border cities, entice hundreds of the young men of Ontario, while Canadians from all the Provinces meet in the cosmopolitan streets of New York and Chicago. It is no unpatriotic preference for American life that takes Canadian youth across the border. Toronto and Montreal, the only Canadian cities that approach metropolitan dimensions, are growing at a rate exceeded by few, if any, of their American rivals, and our smaller cities are nearly all making steady progress. But our urban communities are able to absorb only a part of the thousands who leave country homes to take part in the activities and excitements of city life. In speaking of the modern drift of population cityward we are not forgetting that the star of empire still, as in the days of Bishop Berkeley, westward takes its way. When we read in American papers of the deserted farms and depopulated towns of New England, we cannot but wonder if, after all, the lack of prosperity in the Maritime Provinces is due entirely, or in the main, to any specially faulty economic conditions. We feel inclined to ask, parenthetically, whether our countrymen by the sea would not, under any circumstances, have suffered from the movement westward and cityward that has wrought such disastrous consequences in the States contiguous to them. We have said that Canadians were not to be found, except in insignificant numbers, on the