

# 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.

CANADA'S agricultural and mineral resources have of late been receiving an unwonted and very encouraging amount of attention. We referred in a former number to the visit of the farmers' delegation from Great Britain, and the favourable opinions they have carried home of the Dominion as a farming country. Its forest wealth is, as is well known, practically unlimited. As if to show us how completely all our sources of prosperity are rooted in or buried beneath the soil, recent discoveries with regard to the economic use and value of a particular metal, have called the attention not only of British and American capitalists, but of the Governments of the two nations as well, to the vast quantities of this and other valuable ores of which our hills are the natural storehouses. The important part which nickel, the metal referred to, seems destined to take in the construction of the great armoured navies of the future excites large yet seemingly well-founded expectations of the development of the nickel mines of the Sudbury region. These mines, there seems good reason to believe, are incomparably richer in that metal than any other yet known to exist. As Mr. Snelus, Vice-President of the British Iron and Steel Institute, who, together with other representatives of the iron and steel industry in Great Britain and in Germany, has been on a tour of observation through the mineral-producing districts of the United States and Canada, observed at the banquet at which he and his fellow-travellers were entertained in Ottawa, it seems as if Dame Nature must have loosed her apron-strings and dropped the greater part of her lap-full of heavy and rich ores, her gold and silver and other valuable metals, as she was passing over our country. The two remaining desiderata, necessary to the development of a great industry, are capital and accessible markets. There seems good reason to hope that the Mother Country and the United States may shortly be vying with each other in furnishing both on an ample scale, so far, at least, as the nickel-producing industry is concerned. The fact that the Dominion, in all its parts, is so rich in mines and minerals, as well as in the capacities of field and forest, affords at the same time an additional ground for confidence in the future of our country, and an additional reason for carefully shaping our course, with a view to the fuller and more rapid development of these sources of wealth and power. Canada just now needs wise statesmanship, more perhaps than at any previous period of her history.

WE have more than once had occasion to refer to the fact that it is not easy to find any safe principle by which to determine the character and limits of state-assisted education, other than the democratic one that the whole people should be taxed for the support of those schools only whose advantages are within reach of the whole people. In that connection we have urged that in the establishment and support of evening schools of the best and most practical kind, for the benefit of employees of all classes whose time is fully occupied during the day, the local and municipal legislatures might do a work which would be fruitful in educational results of the highest value. The expenditure thus incurred would be, to say the least quite as defensible, on the principle above quoted, as that on the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes which are doing so excellent a work for intermediate education, and much more defensible than that on a special and unclassifiable institution such as Upper Canada College, to say nothing of the Provincial Universities. It may here be added that such evening schools, or academies, should obviously be placed at such local centres as would bring them within reach of the greatest possible numbers, and should combine judiciously in their courses of instruction the practical and technical with the theoretical and scientific. It is also worthy of consideration whether technical and agricultural departments might not be grafted on many of the secondary schools already in operation with excellent results. Sir Henry Roscoe, M.P., in a recent address at the opening of a college in Edinburgh, while admitting the extreme feebleness of a great part of British secondary education, congratulated his fellow-countrymen on the fact that what may prove to be the germ of a system of intermediate education had "fallen from the skies," in the fund which had been raised by the Government to buy out the public-houses, and had been handed over by Parliament to the County Councils, with a distinct recommendation that it should be employed in assisting intermediate and technical (including agricultural and commercial) education. The sum thus available is estimated for this year at no less than £743,000 for England and Wales, £70,000 for Ireland, and £50,000 for Scotland. The stress rightly laid by so high an authority on the fact that the intermediate education thus provided for should be largely "technical," that term including agricultural and commercial, suggests, as above intimated, a tendency of the times which our Canadian educational authorities would do well to note. The *Spectator*, while agreeing generally with Sir Henry Roscoe's view of the necessity for better intermediate education, does not see why the middle classes, for whose behoof these advantages are to be provided, "should ask the state to help them educate their children out of resources which must be in some degree contributed even by the poor." This objection, which is of weight on the assumption that only the children of the middle classes could profit by the new educational facilities, would be inapplicable in Canada where no such social classification exists.

THE *Montreal Gazette*, which is generally supposed not to speak on important political questions without Ottawa inspiration, says, in a recent article, that it is greatly to be desired that a test case respecting the school legislation of Manitoba should be pronounced upon by the Courts. There is, the *Gazette* thinks, no room for difference of opinion in the view that the determination of the question should be left to the Courts. "The interposition by the Ottawa authorities of the veto would be vexatious, irritating and wholly ineffectual. The Courts, and the Courts alone, can authoritatively and finally pronounce upon the constitutionality of the legislation abolishing separate schools in Manitoba." "In the meantime," adds the *Gazette*, "the obvious duty of the Federal Government is to allow the school law of Manitoba, passed at the last session, to go into operation." This is sound and wise doctrine, and it may be hoped that it correctly foreshadows the course which the Ottawa authorities have decided to take in the matter. Though this course will be out of keeping with the action of the Government in regard to previous Manitoba Acts, it is quite in accord with the views expressed by Sir John A. Macdonald during the debate on the Jesuits' Estates Bill. The decision of the

local Court, to be shortly pronounced by Judge Killam upon a single aspect of the law, will probably involve the whole question of constitutionality. But whatever the nature of that decision, it is quite unlikely that anything short of a pronouncement by the Supreme Court, or possibly by the British Privy Council, will be accepted as final by the defeated party.

A DISCUSSION, started we believe by the London *Advertiser*, has been going on in some of the papers, touching the propriety of "putting the exercise of the franchise," as the *Advertiser* has it, "on the same level as other citizen duties made obligatory by law"; in other words, making voting at elections compulsory. Principal Grant, in his speech at the National Club to which we have before referred, affirmed without reservation that the franchise is a power which should be used, on pain of forfeiture. The *Canada Presbyterian* endorses this view. It says:—

We have never seen an objection to compulsory ballotting that would stand a moment's serious examination. The cry about the liberty of the subject is nonsense. Taxation is interference with the liberty of the subject. So is statute labour. So are custom-house duties. So was the Scott Act. So is the license law. So is every kind of law. To compel a man to go to the polls is not more unreasonable than to compel him to serve on a jury. The verdict of the whole people on a question of national interest is surely of as much importance as a verdict on a small lawsuit.

We readily admit that there is much force in this argument, and that much is to be said in support of the principle of compulsory voting. The great difficulty, it seems to us, is practical rather than theoretical. To compel a man to go to the polls may not be more unreasonable than to compel him to serve on a jury; but it is one thing to compel a dozen men to serve as jurymen, it would be found another and a very different thing to compel every man, not only in the whole district, but in the whole Province and the whole Dominion, to leave home, business, and, in many cases, duties and engagements of the most pressing character, and go to the polling place, often, too, at considerable expense in time or money or both, to deposit his ballot. Then, again, the jurymen is paid for the service he renders to the State. Is it proposed that every citizen should be paid for going to the poll, or that his necessary expenses shall be borne by the State? We refer to these serious practical difficulties, not as insurmountable obstacles, nor as valid objections to the principle of compulsory voting, for they are neither the one nor the other. But they seem to us to suggest the question whether, as a preliminary to the introduction of so sweeping an electoral reform, it would not be found expedient, not to say necessary, to make a radical change in the mode of taking the vote. Why not carry the poll to the elector, instead of requiring the elector to come to the poll? In other words, would it not be fairer and easier, if voting is to be made compulsory, to take the vote in some such way as the census is now taken, by having every elector visited at his own house or place of business? This of course would involve a good deal of trouble, care and expense, in providing the necessary machinery and adequate safeguards of the various kinds required. It might be found wholly impracticable. But something, it seem to us, would have to be done to obviate the hardship of compelling many a poor man to travel miles to the nearest polling station, at an expenditure of time and perhaps money which he could ill afford. This practical inequality in the cost of performing the public duty would constitute a serious objection, which should in some way be met.

FROM whatever point of view regarded, much of the testimony that is being given before the Ontario Prison Commission is extremely interesting. Its practical value will depend largely upon the ability of the Commissioners to discriminate clearly between statements of fact, based upon extensive and accurate observation, and statements of opinion, often unconsciously moulded to fit a preconceived theory. On no point does the testimony of the so-called "experts" vary more widely than in regard to the relative potencies of heredity and environment as factors in the production of character. Perhaps there is some