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Comments on the Customs.



A NEW YEAR'S STOCK-TAKING.—The report of the Minister of the Interior has just been issued, and it may well be called a blue-book so far as its information on the sale of North-west lands is concerned. It will be somewhat vividly remembered by the Canadian taxpayer that, according to the prognostications of eminent members of the Government, the sale of lands in that section of the Dominion would, by the year 1891, bring in enough money to pay for the building of the C.P.R. This is the basis Sir John had for his statement that the railway "would not cost the country a cent," his own calculation being that by 1890 something over \$70,000,000 would be realized. Sir S.L.

Tilley was not quite so sanguine, as he anticipated securing only some \$50,000,000 by '91. Mr. Dewdney, the present Minister of the Interior, gives the actual cash receipts of the fiscal year 1887-8 at \$80,000. This is about as good as any year has "panned out" since the highly fanciful estimates were made in 1879, and what is more—and worse—the expenses of the department have regularly eaten up all the receipts and left a balance on the wrong side of the account. At the present moment, therefore, we not only have nothing from the sale of lands wherewith to pay for the railway, but on the other hand a considerable addition to the public debt. This may be excellent management in politics, but in ordinary business circles it would give rise to unpleasant reflections. Painful as it may be to contemplate this fizzle, no sensible man in the country can wonder at it. With a railway monopoly on the one hand and a "protective" tariff on the other to fleece the worker of the whole proceeds of his toil, what encouragement was there for settlers to go in and purchase those lands, fertile and magnificent as they are? Give the North-west absolute free trade, and look to the land value there as the sole source of re-

venue, and in a few years that splendid country would be filled up with a splendid wealth-producing community. Continue the policy of making it the preserve of land-grabbers and other non-producers, and it must in the nature of things remain a burden and a disappointment.

A BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE.—Mayor E. F. Clarke has been *encored*. His performance well deserved the recall. Toronto has not had a more competent Chief Magistrate in all its history—nor a handsomer one, for that matter. Before his first term was half over, Mr. Clarke had, by his business-like bearing and earnest attention to the duties of the position, transformed all the opponents of his election into warm friends, and it would have gone pitifully hard with any man who had come out against him this year. GRIP hopes and believes he will so act during the present term as to retain all the prestige he has secured, and when he finally steps down from the dais it will be amidst the unanimous applause of his fellow citizens. The Council just elected contains a good majority of excellent men, whose views of civic reform are in line with the Mayor's, and we wish them all a very happy new year, and success in their labors.

GRIP voted early and often against the Inebriate Asylum project, and would like to have another chance of testifying in the same way his opposition to all such institutions. While the sentiment of compassion for individual dipsomaniacs which no doubt moved the promoters of the scheme, is most praiseworthy, the institution itself is an indirect recognition of the legitimacy of the liquor traffic, and stands upon a level with the whole wicked and illogical license system.

WHAT is the feature upon which the efficacy of Inebriate Asylums is based? Prohibition. The theory is that if you keep liquor away from the drunkard, and the drunkard away from liquor, a cure may be hoped for. We fully believe in this theory, but we want it applied, not in an isolated building surrounded with rum-holes doing "business" under the auspices of the Government, and ready to undo the work of the asylum as fast as it is done, but throughout the whole country. Dissolve the bloody partnership between the people and the murder-traffic, sweep away the infernal distilleries and breweries, outlaw the saloons, and let us have Prohibition throughout the Dominion. Then, we can not only cure our present drunkards on the asylum plan, but what is better, prevent the coming generation of boys from being transformed into drunkards by the scoundrels who are waiting to do the work.

THE Board or Trade banquet was a very brilliant success so far as the attendance, decorations and "viands" were concerned. We feel disposed to draw a line at the post-prandial oratory, which, while up to the average, could not be truly described as brilliant. There was too much of shouting and gesticulating over Canadian loyalty to suit the taste of one who believes that Canadian loyalty is in no danger whatever. "The subject who is truly loyal" is not usually given to wordy declarations on this theme at banquets or elsewhere. The recent utterances of hare-brained American blatherskites about annexation were not sufficiently important to justify the torrents of jingoism which very nearly made the banquet a very Bored affair.

ANOTHER thing about some of the speeches was their arrant untruthfulness. Allowance must of course be made for gentlemen who have "an endless amount of edibles concealed behind quinn's full dress shirt fronts," but when it was vehemently asserted over and over again