

quite possible that Sir Alexander Galt's reference to the obligations of Great Britain to bear a part of the expense was intended by Sir John for the ear of that portion of his followers who are disposed to be restless about it, but I am very much mistaken if it will answer any such purpose, and the best thing the members can do is to vote this Imperial policy down and out of existence.

Government is contemplating a change affecting the banks, which, it seems to me, is fraught with great danger. It is proposed that notes issued by any bank shall be constituted a first charge upon the bank—that is, the holders of notes shall be privileged creditors. This, at first sight, may appear harmless enough; the banks have entered no protest against it, and the press has allowed it to pass unnoticed. Probably the banks will not protest, for the strong ones need not, and the weak are afraid to draw attention to themselves; but they must know that such a law would place banks at the mercy of "bulls" and "bears." Suppose some talk on the stock exchange or on the street, that such and such a bank is weak! Those who hold the bills of that bank rush off to convert them into money, and a panic is created, perhaps at the very time when the bank is least able to stand it. Even those who might have the most absolute confidence in the solvency of the institution would be no less in a hurry to get rid of its notes, for they would know that a scare often ruins sound concerns. The Bank of Montreal ought to move in this matter first, for it can best protest against the measure.

An American military critic has been kind enough to lift us into considerable importance as a first-class fighting power. He told the people of the United States that if any difficulty should arise between them and Great Britain, which would necessitate war, Canada alone would be almost, if not quite able, to overrun and ruin their country before they could gather together, and train, an effective army for defence. He told them Canada has six hundred thousand fighting men—soldiers by law—and forty thousand volunteers. As to numbers, a very respectable army, even in these days of big battalions. When I read that statement in the *American Review* two things occurred to me to wonder at:—First, why did not the Earl of Dufferin dilate in one or more of his speeches upon this matter? He praised us for our commerce, and industry, and arts, and sciences; for our great country, and great people, and great past, and great present, and great future; he did not overlook our volunteers, but I think he never said anything about this great army of six hundred thousand men. Perhaps he didn't know this important fact. The second thing: Does that military critic contemplate bringing an American regiment to Montreal next Queen's Birthday? or was he covertly poking fun at us?

That we have forty thousand volunteers, good men and true, is a fact, but the six hundred thousand statement is not quite so substantial. We have that number on the books somewhere, for every male member of the community between the ages of 16 and 60 is a soldier by law—but only by law, for probably not one in a thousand outside of the volunteers and militia is even aware of the fact that he has any military obligations whatever. The United States need not be afraid of us; we won't do them any harm, if we can help it, and we devoutly hope that nothing will arise to call the six hundred thousand of us into the field against any Christian community.

SIR,—Thanking your correspondent in last SPECTATOR for reminding me of an element I had disregarded, I have culled the following statement, which may satisfy the enquiries of readers on the point in question:—

"In the issue department of the Bank of England, its sole business is to give out notes to the public. Before the separation of the departments (banking and issue) the Government owed the Bank £11,015,000 (eleven millions odd, sterling). This sum was declared to be now a debt due to the issue department, and for the issue of notes to that amount no gold requires to be held by it. The Bank was also allowed to issue additional notes on securities—that is, to lend them to a limit which at present amounts to £3,459,900, and this also without holding gold. The amount of notes which may thus be issued without gold being held in reserve is £14,475,000 (fourteen millions odd). The profit the Bank draws from its issue department is the interest received on the £14,000,000 of Government debt and securities, which at three per cent. is £420,000 (four hundred and twenty thousand, sterling) yearly. But out of this the Bank pays to Government for its banking privileges and in lieu of stamp duties, £180,000 (one hundred and eighty thousand pounds), the expense of the issue department being £160,000 (one hundred and sixty thousand pounds). The net yearly profit upon it to the Bank is thus £80,000 (eighty-thousand pounds)."

To revert to Government issues and affairs nearer home, I may mention, as forming part of our currency question in Canada, an interesting problem which has now presented itself, as yet but little discussed in the commercial and financial press, and that is, whether it will be possible for the proposed four dollar (\$4) Government notes to be maintained in circulation in the face of the competition of the bankers' fives—if the banks are, as it is said, to be allowed the fives. As time advances so will our monetary experience and knowledge of social development; but there is one fact about which there is no question, namely, that the return of Government notes to the offices of issue, and consequent reduction of the Government bullion, to which we have thus far been subjected, has been almost entirely the fruit of the exigencies or current demands of the banks, and has not arisen from the desires or apprehensions of the citizen note-holder, who has at all times hitherto been just as willing to hold Government notes as gold, with the single exception of the occasions when he has had to realize in coin for the purpose of leaving home for places where our notes would not be a current tender. And this fact may throw some light upon the contest of the fives and the fours.

The people of Toronto are outraged by the brutal sports of cock-fighters, carried on, as they are, under the very nose of the police. Montreal suffers from the same disgrace. Only a few days ago a large party of respectables! from Montreal met at St. Vincent de Paul to see a number of cocks mutilate and kill each other. I hear that another display is contemplated in a short time, but, of course, the police will know nothing about it until it is over. Why young men seek out for themselves such utterly barbarous amusements is to me a mystery. Dog-fighting and cock-fighting are among the lowest and most brutal games ever invented by the devil for the demoralization of men. They are far more revolting than a Spanish bull-fight can possibly be, and they are cowardly in the extreme. A young man who has a sense of self-respect had better eschew all such things, or he will become utterly animalized.

M. Chapleau has made some appointments since taking office which can better be discussed by and by, but if for the sake of rewarding a partizan, he should make M. Thibault Recorder of Montreal, he will certainly lose more than he will gain. The thing is a simple outrage upon right and decency. The manner in which M. Thibault has sought to secure the place; the petty tricks to which he has resorted, are proof more than enough that he is quite unworthy to fill such an honourable and responsible office. By putting such a man in such an office, in my opinion, at least, M. Chapleau would add that proverbial "last straw which breaks the camel's back."

Why should the Recorder, of necessity, be a French-Canadian or an Irish Catholic? The office has nothing whatever to do with religious questions, and *all* who have to submit themselves to his Honour during the year are not French-Canadians or Irish Catholics; even if they were, it is not easy to see that judge and criminal should be of the same creed. In such a position we want first of all things in a man, that he is sound in judgment and well versed in law. But those are about the last qualifications sought for. First comes the political party, and then the Church, and other considerations any where and at any time.

But what is to be said of the twenty-one aldermen who gave M. Thibault a good character and testified to his fitness for the office? Their reason for doing it is apparent—they wanted to rid the Council of M. Thibault's presence, and imagined it could be done without the chance of public note or comment upon the part they had taken in the transaction. But they reckoned without their host, and now repent at leisure what they did in haste. It was not a very edifying spectacle, that Aldermanic meeting on Wednesday, when gentlemen first denied having signed the paper and then were compelled to own that they had done so, and then sought for excuse after excuse for the silly thing they had been guilty of. They are men from whom we have a right to expect more straightforward dealing. Surely business men—men entrusted with the conduct of our municipal affairs—do not put their names to papers without knowing what they are signing! If they did it in this case, have they done it in any other case? Let us hope they have not, and that from this very evident blunder they will learn a lesson in prudence.