

# THE CRITIC:

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## THE CRITIC,

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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and Articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to this Journal. Our readers are capable of approving or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Twenty leading citizens of Ashland (Wis.) are said to be in jail for not shovelling the snow off their sidewalks. How many citizens of Halifax ought to be in the same predicament?

The *Chronicle* of last Saturday has an article temperately deprecating the expenditure of the Militia Department. Undoubtedly the difference between the lowest figure in 13 years, \$550,451 (1876-7), and that estimated for 1887-8, \$1,293,300, is striking, but much minute examination of statement of what has been done, and contrast of the conditions of different periods, is required to arrive at a just estimate. We propose to examine this subject when the Militia Blue Book comes to hand.

Here is a novel idea in insurances which hails from the duchy of Schleswig. Will any of our enterprising companies take it up? At the birth of a girl the father inscribes the child's name in the books of the company, and pays a certain sum every year. When his daughter reaches her twenty-fourth year and is still unmarried, she is entitled to a certain income and to a couple of well-furnished rooms in a house belonging to the company, which is inhabited by other spinsters who have become members. In case she dies or marries all her rights are forfeited, and the money paid in reverts to the company.

The following statistics of the C. P. R., the great national highway, should be of interest to all Canadians.—The company employs about 15,000 men in operating the line, and in construction. It has 400 locomotives, 400 passenger cars, and about 10,000 freight cars, to all which rolling stock large additions are being made. The gross earnings for 1887 reached nearly \$12,000,000. The company has sold 3,250,000 acres of its land for nearly \$10,000,000, exclusive of the 6,500,000 acres repurchased by the government. The Lake Superior section, concerning which much evil was prophesied by the pessimists, is self-sustaining from its own great mineral resources, independent of the through traffic. Mr. Van Horne states that he could transport 5,000 troops with all impedimenta from Halifax to Vancouver in 7 days. Truly the C. P. R. is a work in which the country may take a just pride!

The *Saturday Review* is down on the *London Times* in its usual caustic fashion for airing dynamite scares on insufficient information or authority. "If," the *Saturday* says, "the *Times* possesses knowledge, it is mischievous to publish it," and we certainly think the *Review* is right.

The *Bankers' Monthly* for December hopes that Mr. Wiman and Mr. Butterworth will tell our citizens exactly how Canada can collect any revenue at our custom houses, or how we can collect any revenue at the Canadian custom houses, under the proposed commercial union pooling arrangement. "This is the point."

The *London Bulletin* says:—"The ladies of the aristocracy seem to be gifted with more common sense than their liege lords. Mrs. Wheeler, ex professional beauty, has opened a shop in Davies-street, Berkeley-square, for the sale of decorative house work. Mrs. Gurney, a lady of the same class, has started a dressmaker's business. One of the Lennoxes—the Duke of Richmond's family—has a shop for robes and dresses, and is doing well. Mrs. Kerr, Lord Dunraven's sister in law, makes and sells bonnets and hats—as yet only privately to her friends—and earns income sufficient by the business to support a large family. Two sisters, daughters of a well-known general in the army, recently opened a shop for children's clothing, and made a profit of £300 in the first few months. But these are the successful ones. How many of our Christmas and New Year's cards have this year been hand painted, if we only knew it, by ladies 'well known in society?'"

The Chinese are nibbling very cautiously round the question of railways. A small line of about two miles was permitted to be constructed and laid down in 1886, and a Chinese Viceroy honored the opening with his presence, and took a trip in a drawing-room car. The line has been running since. Another line, entirely for the conveyance of coal, has since been authorized, and it is said the authorities are not blind to its military utility also. But the Chinese are intensely averse to entrusting strangers with works of the control of them, and there is the great obstacle of the superstitious veneration for the remains of the dead, which, as the burying grounds extend to vast distances round the ancient cities, might easily be disturbed by the operations of the navy; and the desecration of the bones, even of a Chinaman's mother-in-law, might lead to a dangerous outbreak. Nevertheless, an observer of experience thinks a Chinese railway mania by no means improbable.

In reference to the subject of Gymnastic Instruction in the Public Schools, to which we alluded last week, we learn from an authority whose communication came too late for insertion in this issue of THE CRITIC, but which will appear in our next, that there are in the city schools 106 teachers, with an average of about 50 pupils each. This proportion shows the necessity of so organizing as to ensure a large amount of subordinate instruction. Half an hour twice a week would perhaps be the minimum of instruction from which any practical good would be derived. In Ontario the High Schools largely avail themselves of the provision made by the Militia Department for drill, the Department providing a Drill Instructor where application is made, under certain conditions as to numbers, &c. The corps so formed being of the nature of Cadet Corps, with their officers, selected from the senior pupils, are duly gazetted. This system, so far as we know, involves no expense, the instructors being selected from the Artillery or Infantry Schools. At least this was the case five or six years ago, and we believe it continues in force. We are not at this moment aware whether the Nova Scotia High Schools have ever availed themselves of this facility, which involves some good results in the way of wholesome discipline.

## THE STATE OF PARTIES.

The opinion of those who postulate a strong opposition as a fundamental desideratum to systems of popular government fashioned after the English parliamentary pattern, is unquestionably sound. The temptations of too secure a tenure of power are almost too strong for the purity of any party possessing it.

It is, therefore, decidedly to be regretted that "H. M. Opposition" in the Dominion Parliament is undoubtedly the weaker for the events of the last three years, and the line of action adopted during that period.

We say three years, because we think the Liberal party perhaps first seriously damaged its prestige by taking up the Riel cry. Honesty is, after all, the best policy, and the Riel cry was essentially an insincere one. Every one knew in his own heart that there was no justification for armed rebellion, and every one knew that if ever a criminal deserved his fate, Riel