

THE mutual recriminations of the party papers with reference to the process of vote-manufacturing now going on in Queen's County, N.B., sets in a rather humiliating light the possibilities of abuse in our present franchise arrangement and shows very clearly how far it still is from resting on logical or reasonable principles. On the one side it is asserted that the somewhat famous member for Queen's has begun to prepare for a coming day by purchasing a large tract of swamp land, and subdividing it among a number of his non-resident friends and relatives, with a view to furnishing each with a vote in the constituency. On the other side it is retorted that a number of St. John Liberals have registered as voters in Queen's on the strength of their ownership of shares in a so-called farm property which is, as a matter of fact, part of a barren lake. Whether these miserable devices prove successful or otherwise, the system is surely wrong which makes their success possible and thereby tempts unprincipled men to make use of them. Aside, moreover, from any question of fraudulent misrepresentation, the injustice and absurdity of the arrangement which gives an indefinite number of votes to the person who has, or may choose to acquire, a small piece of land in each of a number of constituencies, limited only by the possibility of reaching them within voting hours on polling day, while his neighbour possessing ten or a hundred times as much property within the limits of a single constituency has but one vote, are too obvious to need argument. If we accept the theory that property is the thing to be represented, why should we not consistently carry out the principle by giving to each citizen a number of votes equal to the number of times the minimum of value which we accept as the franchise-conferring unit is contained in the sum-total of his landed possessions? If it be admitted, on the other hand, that Parliament represents other interests of greater value than even those of property, and that the franchise in a free state is a prerogative of the citizen, not an attribute of his possessions, then the sooner we adopt the principle of "one man, one vote," the sooner shall we have reached a logical and safe basis for representative institutions. Surely if the Liberal Party is in earnest in seeking to reform abuses, here is a plank which it should not hesitate to build firmly into its platform.

THE inconvenience and awkwardness of carrying abstract principles too far into practical affairs will be illustrated in the history of many a local Baptist Church, if effect is given to the broad principle laid down at the recent convention at Ottawa in regard to tax exemptions. The Baptists claim, with what success we leave for students of ecclesiastical and political history to judge, that their adherents have always been the most strenuous and consistent defenders of soul-liberty, and opponents of every form of connection between Church and State. Some of the more thoughtful members of the body in Canada have for some time past been impressed with the fact that the prevailing custom of exempting churches and other denominational institutions from municipal taxation is inconsistent with their time-honoured principles in this respect. The Baptists have, it is affirmed, steadfastly refused to receive direct aid from public funds for any of their institutions, even when most other denominations were in the habit of so doing. They refer to their record in declining to apply for any share of the Clergy Reserve Fund or any Provincial grant for their college in Woodstock when other denominational institutions were receiving annual subsidies, in support of their assertion. Troublesome logicians amongst them are now arguing that there is really no difference in principle between receiving aid directly and receiving it indirectly from the public funds. They point out, with irresistible conclusiveness, that the exemption of their church property of various kinds, and of the salaries of their ministers, from municipal taxation amounts really to a subvention from the public purse of a very substantial kind. At the recent convention of the delegates of the churches held at Ottawa the matter was brought forward for discussion by a resolution moved by Mr. D. E. Thompson, of this city. This motion distinctly affirmed that the acceptance of tax exemptions is a direct violation of the historic Baptist principle, and an impediment to the evangelistic work of the churches. The resolution, after prolonged discussion, was carried by a very large majority. Pursuant of the same principle, a resolution was also passed condemning Separate Schools and the State-Church system of Quebec, and calling for a revision of the Constitution to remove these anomalies. The result of this action remains to be seen. Resolutions may be easily and cheaply passed, but if the Baptist body are

really in earnest in this matter, and if, first sweeping over against their own doors, they succeed in pushing the question into the arena of public discussion, and forcing other denominations to take positions on one side or the other, the debate may yet become very interesting. Certainly the Protestant bodies in general, and the poorer churches in particular would, as well as the general public, be large gainers by the abolition of all exemptions.

THERE can be little doubt in the mind of any student of local history that the extent to which settlement and cultivation can modify agricultural and climatic conditions is practically unlimited. In this regard one feature in the informal report which Professor Saunders, the Dominion Director of Experimental Farms, has lately brought from the North-west, is very suggestive. Everyone who has travelled over the great prairies of Manitoba and the Territories will be able to form some conception of the wonderful change that would be wrought in the conditions of life in those regions should those vast level areas become at some future day well stocked with trees. It was formerly supposed by many that the almost utter absence of trees on the prairies must be the result of something in the soil or climate unfavourable to their growth. Subsequent observations have, however, made it almost certain that this treelessness is simply the result of the annual fires which, fed by the heavy crops of dry grass, before the advent of settlers swept unchecked over the whole surface of the country. The pioneers who have made their homes on prairie farms have most of them been as yet too busy with their annual crops to give much attention to tree-planting, but the success which has attended the efforts of those who have made experiments has gone far to confirm the opinion above expressed. In harmony with this experience is the statement of Professor Saunders, that the plantations of forest trees at Brandon have grown very well, and that there are now to be seen avenues of the Manitoba maple, of several miles in length. It may be doubted whether the Government could render any better service to the people of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, and to the Dominion, than by stimulating by every legitimate means universal tree-planting by farmers. The value of belts of trees as a protection against those cutting North-West gales which now sweep with destructive force and keenness in an uninterrupted course for hundreds of miles, would be almost incalculable in the immediate benefits to farmers, to say nothing of their ultimate effects in modifying the severity of the climate, and retaining, if not increasing, the rainfall of the country.

THE recently reported return of the United States warship *Thetis* from the mouth of the Mackenzie River suggests anew the question of the navigability of that great river. The telegram concerning the voyage of the *Thetis* indicates that difficulty was met with from ice only at Point Barrow, the most northerly extremity of Alaska. This is confirmatory of the experience of previous voyagers. The possibility of reaching the mouth of the Mackenzie with properly equipped vessels seems thus pretty well established. In regard to the capacity of the river itself, Lieutenant-Governor Schultz is said to have stated, during his recent visit to Ottawa, that he had received information from the Anglican Bishop of the Mackenzie diocese, who has personally visited the mouth of the river, that steamers might ascend it for nearly fourteen hundred miles of unbroken navigation. This, as was noted in these columns some months ago, has actually been accomplished. These facts suggest possibilities of opening up, at some early day, a new and important route for traffic in the mineral and other productions which are no doubt to be had, and very likely in rich abundance, at various points in the immense territory drained by the Mackenzie. It is also quite too soon to assume that fertile tracts suitable for settlement and cultivation may not be found in favourable locations throughout the region. It is a wonder that the attention of the British and Canadian Governments has not been turned to the desirableness of fitting out an exploring expedition for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the question. Could such a route be opened up, connecting British Columbia with the interior of this great North Canadian land, it is far from improbable that a valuable traffic might be in time established. Those who remember for how long a period our present Northwest Territories were regarded as utterly barren, inhospitable and uninhabitable will be slow to accept the testimony of the first careless or homesick tourist as to the worthlessness of this vast Canadian Siberia.

TWO pamphlets lie before us, claiming notice and criticism. The subjects with which they deal are essentially the same, but the points of view occupied by the writers and the conclusions reached by their reasonings are as wide as the poles asunder. The explanation is simple. Both treat of the future of the United States and Canada, the two great divisions of North America; one is written by a loyal American, the other by a loyal Canadian. The larger and more ambitious is entitled "The Destiny of America," which is, in the opinion of the writer, Mr. Edwin Sutherland, of the District of Columbia Bar, "the inevitable political union of the United States and Canada." The style is clear and forcible; the tone unobjectionable, the aim elevated, but the conclusion far from irresistible. The author sees "two countries separated only by an imaginary line of latitude, almost co-equal in territorial extent, whose agricultural resources and mineral wealth are fabulous, either of which could supply the world with meat, grain, cotton and woollen goods, coal, iron, salt, precious metals," etc. These two countries are inhabited by a race of people of a common stock, a race outstripping all others in physical and mental endowments, literary attainments, mechanical skill and accomplished results. Both profess substantially the same religion which has lifted up men and nations to their present altitude, and which is to be the religion for all men, at all times and under all circumstances. This "Christianity is the lever, and Civil Liberty" (which is the heritage of this race) "is the fulcrum by which the world is to be moved." The true question to be solved is, then, in the opinion of this writer, not "Will the unity of these two countries help or suit the United States, or, will it help or suit Canada;" but "Will it assist or mar in the federation of the world?" Mr. Sutherland certainly presents a flattering view of the character and mission of the Anglo-Saxon nations of America, whatever Great Britain may think of the debt-repudiation and the republican institutions prophesied for her. But Mr. Sutherland's argument entirely fails, it seems to us, at the crucial point, in that he gives us no conclusive or cogent reason why the United States and Canada may not just as successfully achieve this glorious destiny by living harmoniously side by side in mutual independence, as by becoming fused into one tremendous and unwieldy whole. It might even be argued, not without much speciousness, that the force of their instructive example would be very much greater, should that example include such an object-lesson in the Christian science as would be afforded by two great and prosperous nations, living side by side and working out their independent destinies, in harmony, and with mutual good will and co-operation.

THE Canadian pamphlet presents a marked contrast in kind and in style. It bears the imprint of the Toronto News Company, and the *nom-de-plume* of "P. N. Facktz." Its subject is twofold as will appear from the title, "Canada and the United States Compared; with Practical Notes on Commercial Union, Unrestricted Reciprocity and Annexation." These two topics are concurrently treated. The aim in dealing with the first is to show that Canada is superior in the extent of her domain, the strength of her position, the greatness of her natural resources, and in the character of her people and her political institutions. There is much in the pamphlet with which all patriotic Canadians will agree, but the effect of the whole essay is weakened by the very common vice of over-statement. Besides this the first part of it is marred by the copious introduction of quotations from some rhymed effusion which often approaches dangerously near the verge of doggerel, and by a tone so markedly partisan that one might almost fancy it a compilation of editorials from political newspapers on the Conservative side. Even from the purely Canadian, to say nothing of the higher ethical point of view, it is surely more patriotic to inquire calmly whether a given statement, in regard, say, to emigration from the Dominion, is a fact, than to denounce the publication of the statement as treasonable. It is to be hoped, however, that no blemishes of the kind indicated will deter Canadians, and especially the young men of Canada, from reading carefully and pondering well the latter half of the pamphlet, in which the defects of the system of Government which now prevails in the United States are pointed out. Amongst many other serious drawbacks it is shown that the present President was chosen by the minority, not by the majority of the electors; that during his term of office he is really an irresponsible despot, so far as amenability to the people is concerned; that the Ministry or Cabinet whom he calls as advisers are not responsible to the people and do not necessarily represent the majority; that the