

the school-book trade of the Province to be made the pool of publishers. Had Departmental intrigue and party intolerance not been hostile to the third set of Readers (the "Royal Canadian") when the various series were first under the consideration of that incompetent body, the Central Committee, matters would not have got into the tangle they are in at present. To unravel the tangle, while keeping faith with the trade, will call into exercise Mr. Ross' deftest diplomacy. In the Minister's desire to take his own and the right line, it is impossible to withhold from him public sympathy. Until the present machinery of authorization is got rid of, and a return made to an independent and irreproachable Council of Public Instruction, no head of the Education Office will be credited with acting impartially, with the requisite intelligence, and with good faith. Mr. Ross may as well recognize this at once. His compromise scheme, without compensation, we may assure him, will not carry. Nor ought it to carry with any but dishonourable men. If we are right, and the publishing firms should refuse to enter into the proposed arrangement, and insist on the Government's fulfilling its pledges, or be held responsible for damage, then but one other course is open. That is, to authorize the third series in the market, and let the fittest survive in the struggle that would ensue—terminating the period of authorization, with all alike, say, in two years from now. It is, we believe, the right reserved to the Government to cancel, after due and reasonable notice, the privilege of introduction into the schools of the text-books prescribed by the Department. Let this right be exercised, the trade and the public at once be notified, and at the expiry of the period let there be "a new deal." The mistake made in this whole matter of introducing new readers was made at the outset, when the Department failed to commission a few literary experts, counselled by the Government, to undertake the preparation of an official series, which, when completed, it might throw open to the trade, upon its own terms, in the public interest, for manufacture and sale. Departing from this policy, each step in the history of the Government's dealings with the trade in connection with the Readers has been a blunder, and, seemingly, the reign of incompetence and fatuity has not yet ended. Bold Ministerial measures may give assurance that educational matters are henceforth to be better managed; but bold measures, to be successful, should be founded on justice and worked out in good faith.

G. M. A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW BRUNSWICK LETTER.

Our politicians are considerably exercised, at present, in deciding who is to be the successor in the House of Commons of honest John Pickard, deceased. A few persons, calling themselves the Liberal party, are determining who shall run in opposition to the Dominion Government, and a few other persons, calling themselves the Liberal-Conservative party, are selecting their Government candidate. After these persons have made their selections the electors are to be graciously permitted to say which of the two men shall have the seat. Both of the men may be objectionable, morally or politically, but the constituency will have no choice but to take one of them, as no man has any chance as an independent candidate with two party machines at work in the constituency.

Mr. Pickard had a strong personal grip of the county, altogether apart from political considerations, and was not dependent upon any party machinery. He could and did defy the wire-pullers, who more than once conspired to nominate some other Liberal in his stead, and the result of the voting showed how hopeless it was to oppose him. Not because he was an orator, swaying the minds of men with his eloquence; not because he was a statesman, propounding theories of government which commended themselves to the popular intelligence; not because he was a legislator, who could point to useful laws that he had caused to be placed on the statute book, was he so great a person in the county, but merely because he knew everybody and met everybody in a frank, hearty, breezy way, making them feel that he liked them and was glad to see them, and leaving them impressed with the feeling that John Pickard was "a downright good fellow." He was honest, kindly, friendly with all, and had the juvenile air and manner of men who retain late in life a taste for the things of youth.

How characteristic this juvenility is of popular politicians, and how important a factor it is in their hold on the public mind, you may not have considered. But look at Sir John Macdonald, the jaunty leader of the dominant party. What a schoolboy he is among his brother legislators! How he loves a frolic! How he steals off to the smoking room to tell or hear a story while a soul-impassioned orator is showing how to save or ruin the State! And Sir Leonard Tilley, who has also kept his hold on the public mind of two generations. See him don his Windsor uniform, adorn himself with the insignia of the order of St. Michael and St. George, and step around with a jauntiness only second to that of his chief, showing and not ashamed to show that he takes pleasure in displaying the glittering baubles on his breast. And here is our own Provincial Secretary, playfully styled the deacon, who has gained an invulnerable position in the large constituency of the city and county of St. John, acting like a regular school-

boy out for recess when the duties of the moment are not such as to call for a more dignified bearing.

Speaking of politicians and parties I may remind you that partyism, pure and simple, is not the governing principle in our Provincial affairs. We have the ins and outs, of course, but changes are frequent. A supporter of the Government crosses the floor because a scaler of logs has been appointed in his county contrary to his wishes, and a member of the Opposition becomes a supporter of the Government when he is led to believe that he may secure a bridge or railway subsidy for his constituents, or a seat in the Legislative Council for himself, by so doing. The last Government, a majority of whose members belonged to the Liberal-Conservative party in Dominion politics, was overthrown by the defection of three of its Liberal-Conservative supporters—Mitchell, Turner, and La Billois—thus making room for the present Government, a majority of whose members belong to the Liberal ranks. At the recent election in Albert County Mr. Turner employed the Government influence for the election of Sir Leonard Tilley's candidate, and at the coming elections in York Mr. Blair will use the same influence on behalf of Mr. Burpee's candidate, Mr. Burpee being the Liberal leader in this Province. This may appear to be a rather disorganized state of things, but it is inseparable from our no-party system of managing provincial affairs. The supporter of the Government must have the patronage of his county, and he will use his power to help his friends in Dominion elections. The Premier may not like it, but what can he do about it?

The weakest element in our business affairs, this winter, is the lumber interest. Shipments were made all the season at a loss, and the drain upon the capital of the "lumber lords" has been heavy. Their loose change has been used up, and many of them are at the mercy of the banks. These institutions have always been rather conservative in their dealings with the lumber manufacturers, so the latter say, and are disposed to be even more so now. Our principal local bank is said to have refused a loan of \$50,000 the other day to an embarrassed lumber merchant, although he offered security valued at \$150,000, and his paper went to protest accordingly. The business has been overdone, thus glutting the markets and reducing the prices below the cost of production. The fiscal policy of the Government has had nothing to do with the causing of the depression. A few things entering into a lumberman's supplies are taxed more heavily, while other things are taxed more lightly, and the cost of manufacturing deals has not been sensibly affected by the protection policy. The sole cause of the depression is the overstocking of the European market by Norwegian and Canadian lumber shipments.

One of the embarrassing effects of this dullness in the lumber trade, with a decreased amount of logging this winter, will be a falling off in the provincial revenue. A large percentage of the revenue of New Brunswick—nearly all of it, in fact, except the Dominion subsidy—is derived from the sale of lumber licenses and the imposition of stumpage dues, and the restricted operations of this winter will seriously reduce the income from this source. As the Province has barely enough to keep house with and pay the interest on the debentures that have been issued for the erection of public buildings and the subsidizing of railways, any falling off must cause a deficit. But the railway debt is not so large as it will be when the authorized lines are constructed, and our finances will soon have as embarrassing a situation to face as those of Quebec.

The tendency, an apparently irresistible tendency, here and everywhere, is towards an increase in expenditure, even though everybody is calling for retrenchment, and political financiers find it difficult to reconcile this tendency with a fixed income. If a cent a pound could be put on sugar, a ten per cent. increase on rum, or an extra cent or two on tobacco, as in the good old times when the Legislature had this power, the Government might subsidize right and left, and build bridges at the demand of every supporter, and still run no risk of embarrassing the treasury, and the longing to be able to raise money in this way is one of the causes that keep alive a certain degree of dissatisfaction with Confederation.

JAY.

St. John, N. B., Dec. 26, 1883.

BALLAD OF A SUMMER HOUR.

HERE, where the sward is thick and green
Under this spreading oak and old,
Where flocks of daisies shy are seen
Like fairies shrinking from the cold,
And dandelions crowned with gold,
And sunflowers that search the sky
Like wizened sorcerers of old,
Rest till this sunny hour goes by.

Look forward through the leafy screen
To where those old grey towers uphold
A mass of ivy that has been
Still thickening as the long years rolled,
Still drooping many a soft thick fold
Of leaves to hide from curious eye
The rents and scars that time has doled
As many a stormy hour went by.

Birds on the turrets sit and preen
Their wings, not dreaming that the mould
Of time can ever dim the sheen
Of their bright colours manifold.