

# 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.

The Charlottetown *Guardian* looking into the matter of Maritime Union wrote to the Premiers of the three provinces asking for their views on the subject. Premier Fielding says he may be counted upon as a supporter of Maritime Union, provided that a fair scheme be devised, and that the fullest opportunity be given to the people of each province to consider and pass judgment upon it. Premier Peters of P. E. Island recognizes the importance of the subject, but thinks that at the present time it can scarcely be said to be before the people; and Premier Blair of New Brunswick is not favorable to the idea, and would from New Brunswick's standpoint oppose it strongly. It does not look favorable just now for the consummation of this desirable union, but the time must come sooner or later that these provinces shall be under one government.

The Indian Government proposes to build a railway into and through the far-famed valley of Kashmir, at a cost somewhere between ten and fifteen million dollars. The difficulties of this undertaking are enormous, but the opening of the beautiful valley to the influences of civilization and British rule will probably pay both the government of India and the Maharajah of Kashmir, who jointly guarantee the expenditure. The new railway will be constructed along the valley of the Jhelum, one of the five rivers from which the great British Indian province of the Punjab takes its name, and will be about two hundred and ten miles in length. This move appears to be indicative of the increase of British control and the defence of the northwest frontiers against Russian invasions. British statesmen have their eyes about them, and the recent visit of the Viceroy to Kashmir has been productive of better relations with the Maharajah, who has been behaving so well under the direction of the native council, assisted by the advice of the President, that much of his power has been restored to him. It will be remembered that the Maharajah was deposed in 1889 on account of continued misgovernment.

Ever since Columbus made his famous voyage, and discovered this vast continent on which we live, emigration from the older countries to the New World has gone on increasing, and so much has this tendency grown that it has already become a subject of legislation in the United States in order that some check may be put upon all sorts and conditions of men seeking homes within its borders. It appears also that the countries of Europe have cause to look into the subject of emigration, and to this end an

International Emigration Conference was arranged and opened at Paris on November 25th under the presidency of M. Jules Simon, the distinguished French statesman. All the European countries in which emigration has become a pressing question have sent delegates, except Russia and Britain. The latter, however, has a representative present to watch the proceedings, but not to take part in them. Of course the question in European countries turns upon the loss of people valuable to the nations to which they belong, and not, as in the United States, upon the influx of undesirables. The United States is represented at the Conference by Mr. Frederick Brackett, special foreign agent of the Treasury Department, who was authorized by his government to attend but not to take part in the proceedings. The attendance at the Conference has not been large, but as the members will have made an inspection of the vessels engaged in carrying emigrants from the port of Havre, they will likely do not a little good by seeing that the accommodation is adequate.

In this favored land of ours we have enjoyed comparative immunity from loathsome diseases such as leprosy, and the few cases that have occurred have been rigidly looked after by the Government. The story of the two Chinese lepers who arrived at Vancouver from the United States a few weeks ago, and who wandered about without any restraint for a time, until they were obliged to take shelter in the hut in which they had been imprisoned, has awakened no little interest in the subject of leprosy. Fortunately the difficulty over the disposal of these two afflicted Celestials has been disposed of, and they have been sent to D'Arcy Island, near Victoria, where five Chinese lepers have been located for some months past, being provided for at the expense of the Victoria Corporation, and the two additional cases will be a charge upon Vancouver for the present at any rate. The larger issue involved in the matter is concerning the right of the United States to make Canada a dumping ground for persons so diseased. Owing to the alarming increase of leprosy in the Republic of Columbia of late years it is probable that both the United States and Canada will have to pay a good deal of attention to the matter in the near future. It is authoritatively stated that every department in Columbia is more or less effected with the leprous taint, and a celebrated physician of Bogota, editor of the *Medical Review* of that city, demonstrated in a recent article that fully one-tenth of the inhabitants of Sander and Byaco are infected with leprosy. This means that in that part of Columbia there are 100,000 lepers. This state of affairs is a menace to the American Continent, and the Health Department of the United States will before long have to consider the matter seriously, and devise means whereby the safety of the people may be secured. The Canadian Health Department will, if the United States avoids making trouble by showing its lepers over the border, cordially support any action that may be taken.

The sub-committee of the committee appointed by the Merchants Tax Reform Association is to be congratulated upon the report submitted on Monday last at a general meeting of the Association. The report bears evidence of diligent investigation and intelligent consideration, and is a credit to Messrs. W. J. Stewart, Geoffrey Morrow and Arthur P. Silver. It not only emphasizes the evils and unfairness of the present method of taxing personal property, but it goes a step farther by suggesting a radical but effective remedy for these evils, a remedy which appeals to the judgment of every fair minded man as at once being just to the importer and manufacturer, fair to the commission merchant, agent and professional man, and equitable to all classes of citizens. Under the existing law the merchant is taxed upon his goods in store irrespective of whether he has the maximum or minimum quantity generally carried by him. Taxation may thus deal lightly with one importer while it bears heavily upon another. This is equally true of manufacturers, who may at a certain season of the year carry twice as much manufactured stock as at another, and yet the taxation is made upon the stock in hand irrespective of any other consideration. The prosperity of the city is in a large measure dependent upon the success of our merchants and manufacturers, and any policy which places them at a disadvantage in the business competition of the Dominion is short-sighted in the extreme. The committee has prepared a draft act in which briefly stated it is proposed to tax real property at one and a half per cent. In lieu of the tax upon personal property a business tax is to be exacted, which practically may be regarded as a license fee levied upon all individuals, firms and incorporated companies doing business in the city. A specific tax is also to be levied upon insurance companies, brokers, telephone electric, gas and street railway companies, and the banks are to be assessed in proportion to their paid-up capital. Speaking generally we heartily endorse the report of the committee, and we trust when the matter comes up for discussion in the City Council our civic representatives may give to the question the serious consideration which it deserves.