

THE CRITIC.

The future greatness of this Dominion depends upon the development of her varied natural resources, and the intelligence and industry of her people.

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1885.

OUR CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS.

The Volunteer Militia of Canada have been maintained during the past few years at an annual average cost of about eight hundred thousand dollars, and the expenditure has frequently been regarded as worse than useless; but the wisdom of this outlay was fully shown during the recent rebel outbreak in the Canadian North West. Had the rebellion been sprung upon the country at a time when we were without an organized force, we should have been obliged to appeal to the Mother country for assistance, which would have been exceedingly difficult to obtain, owing to the probability of war between Great Britain and Russia; but even if regular troops could have been supplied, much valuable time would have been lost in transporting them to the scene of the rebellion; which would have given Louis Riel and his followers a great advantage, and enabled them to successfully incite the warlike Indians to take part in the outbreak. To the North West settlers the delay would have meant the devastation of their homes, the ruin of their property, and terrible loss of life. These evils have in great part been avoided by the promptness and readiness with which a small portion of our Canadian volunteers were placed in the field, enabling Canada to crush out in a few weeks a rebellion which, had it not been nipped in the bud, so to speak, might have proved a most serious affair for the Dominion, entailing heavy expenditure, sacrifice of life, and destruction of property.

Canadians have now learned the absolute necessity of maintaining an active volunteer force, such as would be able to cope with any difficulty that might arise in the future; and we may therefore reasonably hope that the expenditure upon the militia will hereafter be heartily endorsed by both political parties. The industry and ability displayed by the minister of militia—Hon. A. P. Caron—during the past few months, entitle him to the gratitude and thanks of the Canadian people, while the heroism and soldierly conduct of the volunteers, and the skill and courage of their officers, deserve the highest meed of praise. Canada has good reason to be proud of her citizen-soldiers, and the government should not be parsimonious in dealing with those who have borne without a murmur the dangers and exposure of the campaign; and they should likewise insure by liberal appropriations the continued efficiency of our militia.

RECIPROCITY.

Should Sir John Macdonald within the next month, appeal to the country, making reciprocal trade between the United States and Canada the principal plank in his platform, he would undoubtedly be returned to power by an overwhelming majority, but reciprocity would by no means be assured. The Tariff wall, which now prevents the free interchange of the natural products between these two great sister nations, is still supported on the American side by the props of public opinion. Let these be removed, and the wall will soon be levelled to the ground. Canada has by Act of Parliament agreed to admit, duty-free, upwards of thirty of the chief natural products of the United States, provided that the Government of Washington make a like concession to the people of this country. In some quarters the Canadian Government has been accused of displaying indifference to the interests of Canada in that it has not more vigorously pressed upon the authorities at Washington this question of reciprocal trade. The answer to this accusation is, that Canada has done her part in the matter, and that her chances would in no wise be enhanced by going, hat in hand, to beg of her neighbor as a favor, that which would be mutually advantageous to both countries. It cannot, however, be beneath the dignity of true statesmen to study this question in all its bearings, and thus prepare themselves to prove by weight of argument that the benefits to be derived from reciprocity would be quite as great to the United States as to Canada.

The sectional influences which have been brought to bear upon the American Government find their counterpart in Canada in the coal and flour duties. The manufacturers of New England, and the miners of Pennsylvania and Ohio, are desirous of obtaining cheap coal and cheap bread; but the price of these commodities must always be abnormal, so long as the coal from Nova Scotia, and the wheat from Ontario, are regarded as proper commodities upon which to impose taxation. In like manner the people of Nova Scotia are forced to consume Ontario flour, or pay an unreasonable tax upon that to be obtained from the adjacent ports of the United States, while the people of Ontario are obliged to purchase the coal raised in the distant mines of Nova Scotia, or hand the government a cheque for 60 cts. for each and every ton of bituminous coal imported by them. If the Dominion Government could present such a case as would induce the American Congress to abolish the duties upon these two important commodities, they would at once be reckoned as benefactors, not only by Canadians but also by hundreds of thousands of the citizens of the United States. Will Sir John not take the initiative in the matter of the coal and flour duties, and thus insert the thin end of the wedge of reciprocity?

THE FRENCH-CANADIAN PROBLEM.

A bitter controversy, engendering much bitter feeling, has just arisen between some of the English papers of Ontario and the French journals of Quebec. Partly, no doubt, for political purposes, some of the Reform papers of the former province have published articles which are very distasteful to the French element in our population. Among these papers are the *Toronto News*, the *St. Thomas Journal*, the *Guelph Mercury* and the *Ottawa Sun*. On the other side the *Courrier du Canada* has published, and *L'Éclair* republished some trenchant articles in defence of their fellow-countrymen. An eloquent and vigorous reply to the English papers mentioned appeared in the *Courrier* under the rather suggestive heading, "Francophobia." We translate literally from it some sentences which will show our readers the standpoints from which the French-Canadians view the matter. In reply to the contention that, by the right of conquest, the French language, laws, and social system should have ceased to be recognized, the *Courrier* says:—"Let us give to words their proper meaning. There is in our history a cession, the result of a treaty by which the political government of Canada passed from France to England.—nothing more. We retained our religion, our language, our institutions, our laws. From being subjects of the king of France, we became subjects, and loyal subjects, of the king of England. . . . We remained masters of our soil, of our altars and our hearths. This land of New France continued to be our own native land, and those who came hither in the wake of the English soldiers came to our home and we might well have treated them as foreigners," etc.

Referring to the charge, too well founded we fear, that the French Canadian population are an obstacle in the way of Canadian progress, the writer continues somewhat *boastfully*: "Progress! what progress? Is it intellectual, social, or material? In the intellectual sphere we are your masters. Where are your historians whom you can place side-by-side with Ferland and Garneau? Where are your poets who can dispute the palm with Cremazie? Where are your writers on law who can equal Etienne Parent? In history, in poetry, in philosophy, in eloquence, in historical, scientific and bibliographical lore, we march ahead of you, and you follow us" (111) That he is not ignorant of the importance which Quebec derives from its situation is apparent from the following.—"If we understand rightly, you wish to expel Quebec from the Confederation. But what would you do without us? Where are your sea-ports? We hold you by the River St. Lawrence, we hold you by the Intercolonial, we are really the necessary vestibule of the whole federal edifice. Quebec can dispense with Ontario, . . . but Ontario wants Quebec, if it is only to obtain right of way."

This style of argument will do no good. It is a pity that the discussion has taken so direct a turn. Whatever may now be said as to the un-wisdom of the British North American Act, will not alter the facts of the case; and any legislation which attempted to deprive the French Canadians of their privileges would only cause open revolt. On the other hand, notwithstanding the very modest opinion which the writer quoted from entertains of his fellow-countrymen, few disinterested, thinking men can doubt that Goldwin Smith was right in calling the French element a non-conductor of civilization and material progress. To bridge over the chasm which separates the French from the English-speaking people of the Dominion will be the work of ages. Mild measures which will do their work gradually, are all that can be relied upon for years to come. The emigration of the French into other provinces and the settlement of Englishmen among those who remain may gradually break down the race-barrier which now exists. The study of English in the schools of Quebec might be strongly encouraged by government in order to prepare the way for making English the only official language. But these changes must be very gradual, and all feelings of rivalry excited by the press will only render them more difficult to be effected. In the article quoted from, there is one paragraph to which we can fully subscribe:—"No, it is not by insults and calumnies that the alliance of races, so necessary in this country, will be cemented. Such provocations are dangerous. Having become a system, they would speedily lead to the ruin of our political constitution."

The Dominion is recognizing the genuineness of the claims of Cape Breton to the consideration of our legislators. Now, more than ever, it is incumbent upon the Local Government to do something for that Island. We always thought the Dominion Government would eventually take the lead in giving a railway to Cape Breton, but knowing the extensive needs of the Island as well as the obligations of the Local Government with regard to it, we have always maintained that Cape Breton should get her proportionate share of provincial monies. The two chief reasons for this cannot be too often repeated:—1. Expenditures made for the purpose of developing the resources of Cape Breton will in time prove a splendid investment for this Province. 2. Cape Breton, comprising about one-fourth the population of this Province, and having in the past contributed very largely to our local revenue without receiving any recognition, is now, in common justice, entitled to provincial monies equal to about one-fourth the total amounts expended by the Local Government in Nova Scotia Proper since Confederation.

In reply to a Nova Scotian correspondent, the *Montreal Star* says: "No writer from the Lower Provinces, as far as we know, edits a British Columbia paper." We beg to remind our contemporary that P. S. Hamilton, a trenchant and ready writer, formerly of Halifax, is editor of a British Columbia paper. And there are two other Nova Scotians connected with the British Columbia press.