

A COURT OF RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

The many irregularities in the management of railway lines, and especially their unfair discrimination against certain places and certain commodities, are at last to become the subject of legislation in Britain and the United States. The public are only too painfully aware that a railway company enjoying a monopoly of traffic in any given direction, or a number of rival companies which form a "pool," can create serious fluctuations in the natural course of trade. Monopolies in transport have been hitherto an irremediable evil; but they affect the general prosperity too much to be allowed to continue.

The bill that is now before the British House of Commons proposes much more rigorous measures than the American bill. The former provides for the creation of a court composed of two practical business men and a judge of the High Court of Justice. This court of railway commissioners is to try all railway cases, and against its decisions there is no appeal except in matters of law. All railway rates are to be published, and freight is to be classified by parliament. Where a railway company is reasonably charged with unfair discrimination, the burden of dis-proof is thrown upon the company. The measure is an extreme one, such as extreme maladies demand. The American bill, on the other hand, is less likely to be effective. It provides for a railway commission, it is true; but that commission has only advisory powers, and in disputed questions recourse must be had to the ordinary courts of law. As in the case of the English bill, all rates of transport are to be published, and an effort is to be made to check unjust preferences; but no adequate machinery is provided for carrying out the views of the commissioners.

We in Canada are quite as much in need of such protection against railway oppression as are our brothers in Britain or our cousins in the United States. The merchants of Montreal and Halifax have, within the last few months, complained bitterly of a real or fancied discrimination against the trade of their respective cities. Many other places in the Dominion are similarly at the mercy of great railway lines, and have from time to time made similar complaints. A railway commission, after a full investigation of the facts, could either remedy such evils or prove that none existed. Indeed the Canadians have an additional use for a railway commission. Owing to the comparative scarcity of unemployed capital in Canada, railway companies often seek bonuses from the communities which they are expected to benefit. Then by some adroit manoeuvre on the part of the company, much of the supposed advantage is lost. A case in point occurred a few years ago in the construction of the Hamilton and North Western Railway, which was expected to lower the exorbitant rates of the Northern Railway. By holding out this inducement the emissaries of the new company obtained heavy bonuses from nearly every township through which the line was to run. No sooner was the road completed than the two companies amalgamated, forming the Northern and North Western Railway Company, and rates continued as before. The anger and disappointment of the cheated rate-payers was only equalled by their helplessness. A commission of business men could adjudicate on such cases of deception, as well as on those which would come before a court of commissioners in the United States or in England.

A BURIED AND FORGOTTEN CITY.

During the nineteenth century much interest has been taken in the excavations being made at Pompeii, and travellers visiting Italy have always made it a point to spend a few hours in the old narrow streets of the once forgotten city. A renewed interest in Pompeii was awakened in Halifax by the admirable lecture delivered by Archbishop O'Brien, in which his Grace ably pictured the appearance of the excavated portion of the city.

About the middle of the last century, when complaints were made of the inadequacy of the work of excavation at Pompeii, Winkelmann, who saw the slow methods of proceeding, wrote, "At this rate our descendants of the fourth generation will still have digging to do in the ruins." The work continued about as it had begun, and the prediction made was true enough, for to-day not a third of Pompeii has been unearthed, most of which has been performed during the past quarter of a century. In 1860 the Italian government went seriously to work. To-day Signor Fiorelli, who has charge of the excavations, for the amount of means at his command, calling into play the better methods of engineering, is accomplishing a most satisfactory work.

A good deal of light has been lately thrown on this old buried city by a French archaeologist, M. Monnier, whose aim it has been to give us as correct notions as possible as to what Pompeii was when a live and bustling Oscan city. Pompeii was not a large place, perhaps having at no time more than 30,000 people. It had a fair port, and was most likely a place of some commerce. The streets are alleys. The widest is not more than 21 feet, and there are many with sidewalks and all not over 6½ feet. No vestiges of stables are found in Pompeii. The general narrowness of the streets must have precluded chariots. Small shops must have faced the streets. Where the water supply came from has not yet been discovered, but in time this will certainly be made clear. Artistically the buildings teach us hardly anything in an æsthetic sense. There is an over-abundance of stucco.

In studying these mural decorations, or even the cooking utensils made in bronze, it should be remembered that Pompeii was a place of little importance, and must have followed the lead of Rome, imitating her ways, her artisans not being of the highest class; and appreciating this, then you are struck with the fact how clever were her designers and bronze-workers. Mural paintings were movable, and were attached to walls by means of clamps. They must have been held in high estimation, as are pictures

to-day. Not only the walls, but the doors show the fine artistic taste of that day. Many persons believe that the portion of the city still to be excavated contains the residences of the better classes, and should this prove true, it is probable that our ideas of the barbaric nature of Roman civilization will have to undergo a change.

POLITICIANS WITHOUT A POLICY.

The repeal agitators are destructionists. They have seized upon the present period of dull times as most opportune for their mid-summer crab policy. They talk loudly of the great interests of this Province, and speak of them as if they were quite conversant with their minutest details, fully understood the disadvantages under which they are now being carried on, and the sovereign remedial measures required to remove the same. These men are politicians, not statesmen. Had they been such they would not have endeavored to convince the farmer that the times of twenty years ago were preferable to those of to-day. Farmers know too well that farm produce brings better prices to-day than it brought before Confederation, and that the necessities and comforts of life are cheaper than then. They would not have endeavored to convince our miners, our fishermen, and lumberers, that 1866 was the cap year of our prosperity, and that since that time we had slowly but surely been sliding down the inclined plane of adversity, nor would they have attempted to persuade our manufacturers and commercial men that their interests would be best served by a return to the isolation of 1866. These politicians ask the electors of Nova Scotia to take a step, the consequences of which they themselves are unable to forecast. They give the electors no guarantee that in the event of their unpatriotic purpose being accomplished, they could secure a reciprocal treaty with the United States, nor can they give any assurance that repeal and isolation will secure to Nova Scotia an era of prosperity a whit better than that which we at present enjoy. The truth is, the repealor leaders are politicians, not statesmen, they are willing to sacrifice every interest in the Province, provided they again are permitted to enjoy the sweets of office. Patriotic electors must look to it that men of such a stamp are not again permitted to guide the destinies of a Province which must eventually become the Great Britain of the new world.

BETTER TERMS NOT WANTED.

Our political campaigners admit that in the present election they are utterly unable to forecast the result. This fact is significant, showing conclusively that whatever misconception or discontent may exist with respect to the financial terms of Confederation, there is no general inclination among the people to sever Nova Scotia from its sister provinces in the Dominion. Had such a feeling existed our legislators would have been deluged with petitions praying for an agitation in favor of repeal. No such petitions were received, and while the question was discussed in the House of Assembly the debate savored strongly of partyism, the true interests of the province being of a secondary consideration. No man in or out of the Legislature ever believed that repeal could be accomplished, but many thought that the agitation might have the effect of inducing the Dominion Government to grant better financial terms to Nova Scotia; but now that the *Morning Chronicle*, the organ of the Liberal party, has come squarely out and declared that we did not want better terms, patriots are called upon to lay "party" aside and use their best endeavor to defeat those who would place Nova Scotia in the unenviable position of an isolated province, cut off by hostile tariffs from trade intercourse with her sister provinces and the United States. If the government, now seeking the suffrages of electors, does not want better terms, it is not to be wondered at that its feeble attempts to secure a re-adjustment have proved futile. Had the outgoing government been sincere in its previous agitation, it would have taken effective means to convince the Dominion Parliament that it was in earnest in the matter; it would have rallied to its support the thousands of patriots of both parties who place "country" before "party," it would have made some slight endeavor to secure the co-operation of Nova Scotia's twenty representatives in the Canadian Parliament; in short, it would have left no stone unturned that would aid in securing the end aimed at. But instead of pursuing this course, the delegates of the local government went to Ottawa, not to present the claims of the Province, but to demand its rights; not to negotiate in a friendly spirit, but to threaten dire results should their requests not be complied with. They approached the government at Ottawa clad in repeal armor, inwardly praying that the better terms which they demanded would not be granted. Little wonder is it that their demands were unheeded, but now that the mask has been thrown off and the declaration as to the true inwardness of their object has been disclosed, the patriots of Nova Scotia will understand that the men who masked under better terms resolutions, were in fact out-and-out repealors. On Tuesday next Nova Scotia will have an opportunity of deciding whether or not the principles of such men are worthy of support.

In the Canadian section at the Colonial Exhibition, there are 1551 entries registered. Of these Ontario sends 607 exhibits, Quebec 330, Nova Scotia 220, British Columbia 130, New Brunswick 111, Prince Edward Island 87, North West Territory 48, Manitoba 20. It will be noticed that, considering her population and area, Nova Scotia's exhibits are numerically high, while those of Quebec are low. Only 89 of the exhibits of the latter Province are from French Canadians, the remainder being sent by the English-speaking minority. If the Montreal paper, *L'Etendard*, has good reason to rally its fellow Frenchmen on their lack of enterprise, we in Nova Scotia can with equal justice congratulate our fellow Nova Scotians.