

entirely ignorant of what is passing to the north of them, as the comments of the press would seem to imply. Those who have given their attention to the political and economic development of the last quarter of a century know that the "Australian system" has been in vogue in Canada for at least fifteen years. In one of those useful "Economic Tracts" issued from time to time by the Society for Political Education, we are glad to find this fact frankly acknowledged. "But," writes the author, "we need neither take ship to the Australian antipodes, nor to Great Britain, to observe the value of electoral reform. Across the Canadian border, where it has been enacted since 1874, its benefits have been amply demonstrated. Concerning these benefits, a member of the Montreal Bar, Mr. R. D. McGibbon, thus writes: 'Our system as regards securing absolute secrecy is practically perfect, so that a briber can never be sure that the bribee delivers what he has been paid for. . . . The provision of the statute giving a candidate or his agent the right to require a voter to make oath that he has not been purchased or unduly influenced is a salutary one; many men who will sell their votes will hesitate about committing perjury. On the whole, I think our great need is an educational test for the franchise.'

In these words the same pamphlet indicates one of the most important results of electoral reform: "Throughout the nation there are men of eminent character and ability, whose ambition and pleasure it would be to join the few who worthily fill public place, were politics other than the muddy pool it is. Every reform which clears the political waters will bring these men out; will raise higher and higher the standard of public office; will tend to make statesmanship replace the dishonourable arts and practices of the mere politician." How sorely needed such a wholesome change was a few years ago was very clearly shown by an article contributed by Dr. Parkman, to the *North American Review*, entitled, "The Failure of Universal Suffrage." The discovery that the failure was, in part at least due to defective methods of voting has already tended to improve the condition of things, but to what extent can only be known after the reform has been some time in operation.

Mr. J. Israel Tarte defends the Imperial Federation movement from the reproach of aiming a blow at existing colonial institutions. One of the resolutions on which the League was founded is that no project, to which it shall give its sanction, must in any way affect the colonial parliaments or legislatures. The fact that the Federationists have all along sought the counsel and co-operation of colonial statesmen, so that they might consult together and combine with the Mother Country in promoting the highest good of the Empire as a whole, and of all its parts, shows that their objects are not to destroy, but to build up, to unite in greater harmony, good will and mutual service, not to disintegrate and disrupt. The policy of the League is marked by the utmost frankness, and any thought of touching the constitution of Canada or any other colony is entirely alien to its spirit.

The citizens of Montreal have given their sanction to the million dollar by-law. Though the vote was small, it is for our civic authorities to set such an example of wisdom, economy and regard for the needs of the future as will create a corresponding faith on the part of the people. The money to be spent on immediate improvement is

absolutely necessary, but it is but a small fraction of what will be required before Montreal is made the harbour which its position, population and commercial traditions destine it to become.

NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT.

During a great part of the past year attention has been directed rather to the agitations going on in the North-West than to its rapid and far-reaching development. Since the completion, indeed, of the great route across the continent, the progress of settlement, industry and trade, has been taken for granted rather than discussed. It would be a mistake, however, if this comparative silence were to be regarded as indicative of any standstill in that great movement of colonization which is the most remarkable feature in recent Canadian history. In contemplating its results, there are two questions which must be kept constantly and simultaneously in sight—the building of railways and the taking up of land. The interaction of these phases of enterprise is manifest. When a line of road is contracted for, the district or region through which it runs assumes an importance and value that it had never had before. On the other hand, it is the knowledge that the land is available for colonization that gives an impulse to railway construction or extension. Before the remoter portions of the North-West and British Columbia came under the notice of the general public, the whole vast area had been generally explored and characterized by the Geological Survey, so that the task of selection was considerably simplified. The course of colonization after the first land has been taken up, depends, in a great measure, on the reports of the pioneers. The pamphlets giving the experience and opinions of a large number of settlers in Manitoba and the Territories could not fail to bear fruit. However willing farmers in the Old Country may be to listen to the descriptions of expert visitors like Prof. Tanner or Prof. Sheldon, they are still more likely to give heed to persons in their own circumstances, with their own wants and aspirations. Besides, in answering the questions put to them, the intelligent settlers—especially those who had left England to push their fortunes in the New World of the far North—would use a language which intending emigrants would understand and would treat the whole subject in a direct, practical way, that men who had always lived on a farm would appreciate. It was, doubtless, fortunate that, at the outset of North-West settlement, so large a proportion of the pioneers should have gone thither from older Canada and should thus have been inured to Canadian agriculture. When Englishmen or other Europeans took up land in a community thus largely peopled by experts, they could be at no loss for information, warning and guidance. But what has tended most decidedly to give assurance to the new-comers was the knowledge that, in moving into the heart of the continent, they would not be cut off from communication with the rest of the world. The railway policy laid the foundations of North-Western prosperity.

The C.P.R. is already an old story for us. In Great Britain they have really only begun to take in its full significance. Notwithstanding Canada's comparative nearness to Europe, there is only a mere handful of public, business and scientific men, who look upon it with sympathetic interest. The ignorance that prevailed some years ago has, it is true, largely disappeared, but the knowledge

that has succeeded it is, save in a few instances, by no means profound, and it is certainly not universal. In this busy age when so many different objects engage people's attention, it is only on one or two specialties that the mind can be concentrated, and of the class that helps to form public opinion in Europe those who are personally concerned in our affairs are few and far between. We can imagine, perhaps, with what sentiments most people look at us from across the Atlantic from our own feelings with respect to Australia or South Africa. Our thoughts are turned to the former of those great possessions just in proportion to the chances which it offers of profitable trade. From this common-sense point of view, we certainly cannot complain of the rate at which Canada is becoming a subject of concern to Europe—Great Britain, of course, especially. And our position there to-day—so different from what it was a quarter of a century ago—is largely due to the North-West. If some writers—some of our own writers, moreover—were to be credited, the progress of settlement has not only not kept pace with expectation, but has, in comparison with the hopes indulged, been little less than a failure. That Canadians should not hesitate to convey such an impression to the outside world would be incredible, if we were not used to it. But we know how unscrupulous some persons can be when they have political aims to serve. The impression is undoubtedly a wrong one. Judged by the "Boom," the quiet, steady progress of recent years may afford a sufficiently striking contrast—but it is a favourable contrast. The Boom was sure to end some time. It was well that it ended early. In a country like the North-West, traversed by one great trunk and a number of branch railways, a merely local boom is an anomaly.

The progress of the North-West may be estimated variously according to the starting point we take. It seems only the other day that we were reading the "Great Lone Land"—that wondrous record of travel under difficulties. But that is too far back for a retrospect. We might choose to make our horizon the year 1881, when the pioneer railway had already begun to revolutionize the face of the country, or we might confine our survey to the period since its completion. Whatever be the range fixed upon, the results are equally surprising, for the advance has been constant and in all directions. The main line alone, with the elevators and flour mills along its track, gives scope for justifiable felicitation. But the subject has been often dealt with. The Manitoba and North-Western has done wonders in the development of a tract of country unsurpassed for grain-growing and stock-raising facilities. In connection with the Governor-General's visit, we gave some of the evidences of prosperity that may be witnessed along this route. Other lines, long looked forward to, have at last begun to satisfy the hopes of the expectant localities, and the Prince Albert, Battleford, and other thriving northern districts, will soon have all their desire in the way of communication. The immigration during the past year has been considerable—some 22,000 souls having been added to the population. The manner, in which Winnipeg, Regina, Brandon, Calgary and other centres in Manitoba and the Territories have advanced in population, wealth and general improvements, has been most gratifying. If we add British Columbia to our survey, we shall, of course, have a still more satisfactory showing. Vancouver has already a