

It is usual to include, if possible, in our annual programme, a paper on Canada, as forming one of the most important parts of the Empire, and we are fortunate in having induced Mr. Sandford Fleming, who has just arrived in this country, and whose name is a household word in the Dominion, to address us this evening. The Royal Colonial Institute is being favoured with another prosperous year, and continues to command the confidence of our Colonial friends and supporters. We have added to the roll no less than 176 new Fellows, as against 119 during the corresponding period of 1895. Several important questions have recently come under the consideration of the Council. In view of the general desire for a closer relationship between all parts of the Empire, they have felt it their duty to urge on the Chancellor of the Exchequer that serious objections exist to the present practice of levying income tax here on income that has been earned and already taxed as such in the Colonies and Dependencies. They, therefore, asked that the law might be so amended as to exempt income from the payment of income tax in the United Kingdom in all cases where it has already been charged with income tax in that part of the Empire, wherever it may be, where it was earned. The Lords of the Treasury state, in reply, that they are unable, for various reasons, to accept the suggestion contained in the memorial; but the Council are still hopeful that, on further reflection, the desired exemption may be conceded. We rejoice to be able to welcome this evening Sir Mackenzie Bowell, who took the place of the late lamented Sir John Thompson, and who has served Canada as Prime Minister. We are glad to find that although he has for a time laid aside official harness, he is hard at work at the present time at the conferences now being held in London, serving Canada as he has throughout his whole life. We hope he may long be spared to continue his able and useful services. We have also the pleasure of welcoming for the first time—not for the first time in his personal capacity, but for the first time in his official capacity—Sir Donald Smith, High Commissioner for Canada, and we are well assured there could be no worthier representative of Canada in Great Britain. Mr. Sandford Fleming is also by no means a stranger to these rooms and these audiences. You are aware he may be called the pioneer of trunk railway construction in Canada, for he was chief constructor of the Intercolonial Railway. It is not only as a great railway constructor that he is distinguished, but as a man of science. It is to him we owe the meridional division of time. As you are aware, the great continent of America is mapped out by meridians, and within them the