

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK :

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

IF truth lies between extremes, the truth as to the success or failure of the Confederation of the Canadian Provinces should certainly be found somewhere between the *Globe's* and *Empire's* Dominion-Day articles. We cannot add that this truth is far to seek, for the space intervening is immense. Were we in need of a striking illustration of the power of party views and purposes to distort the vision we should feel that our search was ended when we had come upon the two articles in question. The fact is, we suppose, that the truth in this case lies about midway between the two. The union has neither been a grand success nor a disastrous failure. So far as the two Provinces of old Canada, at whose instance and in whose interests it was brought about, are concerned, it accomplished the main purpose sought. It opened a way out of the pit of political despair into which sectional strife had brought them. To the Upper Province it brought the representation by population for which it had been so long struggling. To the Lower Province it continued, though under changed conditions, the power of controlling legislation by means of the "solid vote," which had been the source of its previous power. Whether that power has been hitherto, or is likely to be hereafter, greatly abused, we do not now undertake to say. To the Maritime Provinces the Confederation, so reluctantly entered into, has brought some material advantages. Whether these are counterbalanced, or more than counterbalanced by the injury which the high tariff has done them, is a question upon which there is room for and is much difference of opinion. Confederation has succeeded in making possible the construction of great public works whose usefulness will probably be much greater in the future than in the past. It has led to the establishment of manufactures on a much larger scale than could have been anticipated at the date of union. Above all it has opened up the great Northwest, destined to become the abode of prosperous millions. But if the chief end of Confederation was to bind together in a common national feeling the British subjects in the different Provinces, it

has lamentably failed. The people of the Maritime Provinces are scarcely more Canadians in sentiment than they were twenty years ago. We speak of this, not in a pessimistic spirit, but as an evil which should be recognized and if possible removed. We despair of its removal so long as we retain our Colonial status, causing those Provinces, by reason of the disproportionate size of Ontario and Quebec, to feel like colonies of a colony. Probably the mistake of retaining the name previously belonging to one part of the original territory helps to perpetuate this feeling. When the time comes for us to ask and receive the status of an independent nation we may hope to see the sentiments of nationality and patriotism developed to whatever extent they may be capable of development.

THE Dominion Government still adheres to its purpose of subsidizing a line of fast mail steamers between certain specified ports in Canada and others on the European side of the Atlantic. If the service can be obtained at any expense reasonably within the resources of the Dominion there can be no doubt that the arrangement is a very desirable one. A direct weekly mail line will doubtless, if properly managed, have considerable effect in promoting trade and intercourse with the Mother Country. On two or three points, however, there is room for difference of opinion in commercial quarters, as to the best means of accomplishing the end in view. In the first place it seems nearly axiomatic that the benefits of such a service will depend very largely upon the provision made for direct and rapid transmission of merchandise. The absence of any stipulations in regard to freight-carrying capacity cannot surely mean, as some are interpreting it, that the vessels in question are not to be required to carry freight, as well as passengers. The saving of time in the transmission of mails and passengers will be discounted to the half of its value to the business men who will be the line's best patrons, if they have to wait for the arrival of their merchandise, at either side of the Ocean, by the old routes. It surely must be possible in these days to combine an average speed of eighteen or nineteen miles an hour with a moderate capacity for freight. If not, we have little doubt that the voice of the great majority of those interested would be in favour of a reduction of the rate of speed to the necessary extent. Another point of great importance is the choice of route and termini. Quebec in summer and Halifax, or Halifax and St. John in winter are of course the correct points on this side of the Ocean, but if business, not sentiment, is to be the controlling principle, as the people have a right to demand, it seems impossible to defend the proposal to make a port in France the terminus on the other side and Southampton or Plymouth merely a port of call. At least if there is any reason based on commercial facts and figures for extending the trip to France, it has not yet been given to the public. THE WEEK, as our readers know, has taken no part in the race discussions which have been, unhappily, all too rife during the last few years. We have no anti-French prejudices and are unable to see why our French fellow-citizens should not be permitted to cherish a little harmless nationalism, so long as it consists with thorough loyalty to British institutions. But we must join most heartily in a protest, which should gain irresistible force, against any proposal to allow simple business considerations in such an enterprise as this, to be sacrificed in any measure to mere racial sentiments. We are glad to see that some influential papers which usually support the Government are not afraid to express their disapproval of an arrangement which threatens to increase very largely and quite unnecessarily the expense of the new service, while not materially increasing and perhaps positively lessening its commercial value. Unless some strong reasons can be brought forth, of which no one seems as yet to have heard, people and press all over the country should unite, before it is too late, in such a protest as the Government could not disregard.

IT is now announced, on what seems to be good authority, that the Ottawa Government has decided to give such aid to the Hudson Bay Railway project as will ensure, with the aid the Province may be able to give, the construction of at least a large part of the road at an early day.

We have long been of opinion that the opening of railway connection with Hudson Bay should be the next great Canadian enterprise. It is true that many still doubt the feasibility of maintaining Ocean intercourse between that bay and Europe with sufficient regularity and for a sufficiently lengthy period of the year to make the route reliable for Ocean traffic. But the weight of evidence in favour of the more hopeful view is certainly great, and the magnitude of the benefits which would accrue to Manitoba and the Territories from the establishment of such a means of direct traffic with the Mother Country is enough to warrant risking a good deal on the venture. In any event the construction of the road to the Saskatchewan cannot be very unsafe, as a commercial investment, in view of the resources both agricultural and mineral that will be opened up. We hope to hear at an early day that all monetary arrangements have been successfully made by the enterprising men who have the matter in hand, and that the work is being vigorously pushed. Meanwhile, were we resident in Manitoba, we should not cease to keep an ambitious and expectant eye turned ever in the direction of the great northern inlet, and to cherish dreams of a vast and ever increasing volume of traffic pouring, at some day not very far distant, along the new route opened up by that short cut to England and Europe. And what so greatly interests our fellow-citizens on the prairies should interest all Canadians.

THE death of the Hon. A. W. McLelan, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, has removed from Canadian public life, if, indeed, the quiet but responsible and honourable retirement of the gubernatorial office can be so considered, another of those who have taken a prominent part in shaping the course of events in the Dominion since Confederation. As is well known by those who have followed attentively the history of the Dominion since its formation, the deceased gentleman was one of the many leading men in Nova Scotia who were at the outset strongly opposed to Confederation. He took a prominent part in the negotiations which led to the "better terms" arrangement by which the determined hostility of that Province was partially quelled. He had been elected to the Legislature of his native Province in 1858, and had continued to represent one of the Colchester ridings in that Legislature until the union. In 1869 he was called to the Senate by Sir John A. Macdonald, and about the same date was appointed one of the Commissioners for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. The deceased first became a member of the Dominion Cabinet in 1881, a position which he retained until his appointment to the Lieutenant-Governorship of Nova Scotia about two years ago. During his seven years of service as a Cabinet Minister he held successively the position of President of the Council, and the offices of Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Minister of Finance and Postmaster-General. Though the announcement of his death came suddenly to the public who had had no previous notice of his illness, it was, we believe, not unexpected by his friends, who had noted indications of failing health for some months past. Mr. McLelan was a man of good native abilities, and was diligent and faithful in the discharge of the duties of the various offices with which he was entrusted.

THE announcement that General Middleton has resigned the command of the Canadian militia puts an end to a situation that was becoming painful. It was bad enough, in the first instance, that one occupying so high a position in a profession which prides itself on cherishing the most scrupulous sense of honour, should have been betrayed into the act that finally drew upon him the censure of Parliament. But when the officer thus censured went on, week after week, coolly attending to the duties of his office, as if nothing had happened, or as if resolved to treat with disdain the opinions of the people whose servant he was, even when these opinions had been expressed through Parliament, it was inevitable that public indignation should be aroused such as would have compelled stern action as soon as Parliament again met. The fact that General Middleton has at length made a virtue of necessity brings, therefore, a sense of relief to the country. It certainly