

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 person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

WE reprint in this number a valuable paper on the manufacture of iron and steel in Canada, which was read by Mr. W. Hamilton Merritt, F.G.S., before the Geological and Mining Section of the Canadian Institute. Mr. Merritt, as most of our readers are aware, though as yet comparatively a young man, has already taken a high place among successful students of geology and mineralogy in their practical applications, and has made some valuable contributions to our sources of knowledge of these sciences in their bearing upon the mineral resources of the Dominion. His statements and conclusions may therefore be accepted as those of a thoroughly competent observer, as well as of a true Canadian anxious to promote the well-being of his country. The article itself is of peculiar interest and value at this particular juncture, when the very important question of developing and utilizing the vast mineral resources of the Sudbury and other districts of Ontario is under consideration by the Provincial Government and Assembly. It is desirable that the new policy which, it is understood, will shortly be proposed, should have the closest scrutiny and criticism by all who are competent to speak with authority on such a subject. Meanwhile Mr. Merritt's paper seems to establish, almost beyond question, several important facts touching the mineral riches of the Dominion. He points out that the development of iron mining and manufacture in the United States, during the past four or five years, has been most remarkable, and that the production of pig iron has risen from less than one million tons in 1860 to more than ten millions in 1890. Mr. Merritt further shows that the great Republic produces more than one hundred and thirty times as much pig iron per head of the population as Canada. He maintains, too, on what seems to be satisfactory evidence, that the conditions of manufacture of iron and steel in Canada, as determined by the abundance of the ore and the location of the mines in regard to fuel for smelting and to facilities for transportation, are at least as good as those of the United States, while our inexhaustible supplies of nickel ore, lately discovered to be so valuable as an alloy in the manufacture of steel, give us an incomparable advantage, so far as is yet known, over every other people, and cannot fail to be, if rightly utilized,

a source of untold wealth. That we have all the material needed for the manufacture of iron and steel, Mr. Merritt confidently answers in the affirmative. Have we the other indispensable condition—a sufficient market—is a more difficult question. Assuming that Canadians use, on the average, as much iron and steel as their neighbours, it is shown that the total quantity used in Canada would suffice to keep twenty-seven or twenty-eight blast furnaces in operation. The conclusion to which Mr. Merritt's argument leads is that Canada should adopt a policy which says, "We are going to smelt our own iron and steel," this policy being, of course, one of protection to whatever extent may be necessary to keep out importations. That the paper establishes this conclusion we hesitate to affirm, notwithstanding its merits. Two difficulties at once suggest themselves. The one arises out of the peculiar geographical features of Canada, and the magnificent distances over which the weighty product would have to be carried, when manufactured, in order to supply the whole market; the other, closely connected, relates to the enormous increase of cost of an article of daily and universal use and necessity, which would almost surely result, for a time at least. Would it be fair that all the farmers and other citizens of the whole Dominion should be so heavily taxed in order that even a large number of men should find employment in a new industry, and a-half dozen or so of them perhaps be enriched by it? Would the users of iron and steel submit to such an impost or should they be asked to do so?

HON. EDWARD BLAKE'S brief note in the *Globe*, called forth by "the contradictory inferences to which a sentence in his Durham letter, detached from its context, has in several quarters unexpectedly given rise," and explaining that he thinks "political union with the States, though becoming our probable, is by no means our ideal or as yet our inevitable future," is, we are sorry to say, quite as unsatisfactory to admirers, desirous of knowing his exact meaning, as the longer document which it is intended to explain. In our own case, and we have no doubt that the remark is true of most readers who came to the same conclusion, the inference was drawn not from any one sentence detached from its context, but from a careful study of the letter as a whole. We never for a moment supposed that Mr. Blake regarded political union with the States as our ideal future. On the contrary it was quite apparent from the whole tenor of his paper that he reached the conclusion that it is our probable, if not inevitable future, with great reluctance. But we confess that we were unable to resist the conviction that he did regard it as almost, if not quite, inevitable. If one should inform us that every avenue of escape from the building in which we were at the time located was locked and barred, with the exception of a single door, and that it was impossible for us to remain in the building, we should not deem it an unfair inference that, in his opinion, we must make our way out by that particular door. Mr. Blake certainly did not make the case quite so strong as that, but yet after searching the whole article carefully from beginning to end, we were unable to find that any outlook into the future was shown us with the least degree of hopefulness, save the one indicated. As it is, even now, our gladness in learning that Mr. Blake does not regard political union with the States as inevitable, is very seriously modified by our sorrow in learning that he does think it is becoming our probable future. We still sincerely hope that Mr. Blake may see it his duty as a citizen and a statesman to lay aside his reserve at some early day, and not only point but lead us in the direction which will bring us as near as possible to our ideal future. Meanwhile we must respect his evident desire that, for the present, his views shall be known to the public only negatively.

THE vigorous attack made by Sir Charles Tupper on the Grand Trunk Railway, and the rejoinder of Sir Henry Tyler, are well adapted to call the attention of the people of Canada to the evil and the danger attendant on the entrance of great railway corporations into the arena of partisan politics. To the impartial onlooker, who remembers that the party whose cause the Grand Trunk so warmly espoused, must have been supported by

nearly one-half of the electors of the Dominion, and that the Canadian Pacific Railway openly entered the lists with no less zeal and with still greater effect on the side of the other party, the attitude taken by the High Commissioner must appear, to say the least, remarkable. We are, as our readers are aware, no admirers of the party system of Government. But we had supposed that that system was understood and accepted on all hands as the one which at present obtains in Canadian politics and that, as such, it implies equal rights and privileges for both parties in making their appeals for popular support. On what principle, then, Sir Charles Tupper could believe himself justified in denouncing the one company for giving active aid to the Opposition, without involving in the same condemnation the other company for giving aid no less active to the Government, such impartial onlooker must fail to understand. As a supporter of the Government, Sir Charles had of course a right to maintain that, to quote the *Empire's* words, "the Dominion Government was contending for the integrity of our entire financial and commercial fabric, against a revolutionary proposition to overturn our industries and jeopardize the stability of the country." But Sir Charles is too astute a politician not to perceive that such a plea is a palpable begging of the question. Mr. Laurier or Sir Richard Cartwright would, no doubt, maintain with equal strength of conviction that in fighting against the Liberals and Unrestricted Reciprocity the Canadian Pacific was fighting against the only policy which could save the country from the ruin, or the annexation, which Mr. Blake so clearly sees lowering on the horizon, if the "old policy" is persisted in. These contradictory pleas must seem, so far as we can see, to a really impartial observer, equally legitimate, but neither could justify the party leader who made use of it in denying to one railway corporation the liberty accorded to another, to join in the fray on behalf of the side to which its supposed interests inclined it. But Sir Charles Tupper, if his somewhat famous Amherst speech was correctly reported in the *Toronto World*, took a position even more extraordinary and illogical, as the following extract will suffice to show:—

The Grand Trunk Railway had received more from the Government of Canada in proportion for the return they had given than the Canadian Pacific, yet these craven creatures had embraced the first opportunity to spring at the throat of the Government and endeavoured to choke it in the interest of an alien people. The Government were of a forgiving disposition, but they would fail in their duty if they permitted this great corporation to obtain increased power, influence and importance in this country.

We had supposed that, in theory at least, the aid given to railroads and similar enterprises was given by and on behalf of the people, not the Government, and that the Government was solemnly bound to recommend and apportion this aid solely in the interests of the country, without respect of person or party. Surely thoughtful and high-minded supporters of the Government must regret and repudiate such a view of Government obligations as is implied in the above two sentences.

IRRESPECTIVE of the foregoing considerations every fair-minded and patriotic member of either party must, we think, be convinced that it is exceedingly undesirable and improper that railway corporations should, as such, identify themselves with either party in a political contest. Such corporations stand to the public in a different relation from that of other bodies. They exist by virtue of a Parliamentary charter which confers on them extraordinary powers and privileges in relation to private property. They are, in Canada at least, usually constructed to a large extent by means of gifts of lands, the property of the public, and of money raised by indirect and direct taxation of the people. All this clearly implies that they exist, or are supposed to exist, for the service of the whole people. As the subsidies bestowed are taken from the pockets of the tax-payers, irrespective of party, so it behooves the Government through whom these subsidies are given to see to it that the services performed are performed without respect of party. No one would, of course, think of denying the right of everyone connected with a railway, in any capacity, to use his utmost influence as an