

THE PEOPLE'S RAILWAY.

From all sides we hear complaints of the way in which the I. C. Railway is at present being managed. These complaints are either without foundation, or they arise from a condition of affairs which require immediate investigation. This railway is the people's road, and it cannot, therefore, with justice to the people, be run so as to unduly favor the interest of private individuals or particular sections. To work the Intercolonial Road upon commercial principles, is the avowed aim of Mr. Collingwood Schrieber; but, if in doing this, he gives to St. John wholesale dealers unfair advantages over those of Halifax, Truro, and Amherst, in the matter of rates, and establishes a tariff, prejudicial to the interests of Halifax manufacturers, as compared with those of Montreal, it is time his commercial principles were remodelled in the direction of commercial equity.

Private individuals have an undoubted right to enter into a legitimate enterprise such, as the building and carrying on of the Inch Arran hotel at Dalhousie; but they have no right whatever to use their positions, official or otherwise, to ensure the success of their enterprise, by the issuing of free tickets over the people's railway to the guests who put up at this particular hotel. We believe that Messrs. Pottinger and Taylor are most capable railway officials; but we think, that in view of the many direct charges made against the management of the railway, they should, in justice to themselves, court the fullest enquiry as to the grounds upon which these charges are based. The public interests demand that a careful investigation be made, and this without delay. Should such an investigation prove that the affairs of the road are being honestly and judiciously administered, we shall gladly give publicity to the same.

But if matters are allowed to drift along, as at present, without any effort being made by the railway authorities to refute the serious charges that have been made against their management, we shall use our best endeavors to ascertain and give publicity to the causes of the present dissatisfaction.

A BROAD COMMERCIAL UNION.

Undoubtedly, the people of Canada favor reciprocal trade relations between the Dominion and the United States, but they will require something more than mere assertion to convince them that the doctrine of Commercial Union now being promulgated by Wharton Barker, of Philadelphia, and Professor Goldwin Smith, of Toronto, is the doctrine to which they are called upon to pin their faith. With unrestricted Commercial Union, the Custom Houses on each side of our southern boundary line would be abolished, and this it is claimed would open to Canada a market eleven times as great as that which she now enjoys; but it would, at the same time, throw open to the competition of the 55,000,000 people in the United States the restricted markets of Canada. And it yet remains to be proved that the extension of our markets would compensate for the keen competition that would follow in our home markets. The advocates of Commercial Union appear to count upon the Mother Country quietly acquiescing in an arrangement by which American manufacturers would secure privileges from which the manufacturers of Britain would be shut out by a hostile tariff equal to that of the United States. If the theory of Protection is tenable, the supporters of that policy cannot endorse the doctrine of Commercial Union with a country like the United States of unlimited wealth and resources, the outcome of which would be the annihilation of our infant industries. If the free trade theory is correct, the supporters of that broader and more enlightened policy cannot go back on their principles by uniting their commercial interests with a country in which the Protectionist's ideas predominate, thus cutting themselves off from the possibility of closer Commercial Union with the only free trade country under the sun. Let us first obtain Commercial Union within the British Empire, and it will then be time enough to talk glibly about making a similar arrangement with the United States. The British Empire, including Great Britain and Ireland, with forty Colonial possessions, has an area three times as great as that of the United States, and a population more than five times as large. The field for Commercial Union in this direction is certainly wide enough to satisfy those who clamor for the extension of our markets. Moreover, such a union would not be fraught with the same grave dangers to our political existence as is that advocated by Goldwin Smith and Wharton Barker.

A MEDAL FOR THE POLICE.

We see by our exchanges from the North-West that great dissatisfaction exists in the Mounted Police at the denial to that force of the medal awarded to the troops engaged in the suppression of the Riel insurrection. Nor is the dissatisfaction confined to the Police, for it seems to be fully shared by the Press of the territories, a large portion of which is outspoken in denunciation of an injustice which certainly appears to us to be flagrant. Strong assertions are not wanting that the services of the Police have been systematically depreciated, and the force insulted, in a manner (if the allegations are correct) in the highest degree discreditable to the high-functionary to whose charge this petty jealousy is laid. It is not altogether easy to believe that the treatment of the force has been quite as disgraceful as has been confidently and unhesitatingly affirmed, but we do not forget the extreme difficulty which we experienced during the operations of last spring in accounting for movements, or want of movement, of the causes of which it seemed desirable that the public should be made aware. The impenetrable mystery which obscured the sources of information was quite inexplicable, tho' it did not then arouse suspicion that the solution of problems might be discoverable in sinister motives in a quarter where it would never have occurred to men of honor believing in honor—especially in military honor—to look.

To those who know Col. Irvine, for instance, the inactivity of his immediate command while General Middleton was approaching Batoche, gave an unpleasant impression, which was far from being dispelled by the tardy and unsatisfactory explanation that he had no horses.

Now, in 1871, in bad fall weather, Col. Irvine marched his infantry and artillery force at a moment's notice, from Fort Garry to Dufferin, to repel the Fenian raid, which Col. Wheaton the U. S. Commander at Pembina had, with the most honorable promptitude, and owing to his close vicinity, already crushed. But, in the then existing state of feeling south of the border, Irvine could not calculate on so rapid and friendly an action, and there being then no telegraph, was in fact unaware of it. It was therefore natural to suppose that in default of horses he would have advanced to take the rebels in the rear, on foot.

The N.W. press unhesitatingly solves the puzzle by asserting that Irvine was kept stationary by imperative orders which it does not scruple to ascribe to very base motives. However this may be, General Middleton cannot be acquitted of perverted preceptions in the gross injustice of his resolute refusal to recommend the police for the medal.

His alleged reason is, if correctly reported, absurd. He is stated to have based his action on the fact that the Police is a force paid for regular duty. If such a plea be admitted, the whole system of giving medals to the Imperial army is unsound.

We are of opinion that granting a medal at all was a mistake. But, being granted, there is no reason or equity in withholding it from the Police, the strong discrimination against whom is most invidious. As it is, the Police trooper has no grant of land to look forward to, after five years' hard service, while the volunteer gets (as he deserves) his grant for three or four months.

It is a matter the Government should look to at once.

OCEANA.

The present and future relations of England and her colonies are attracting so much attention at present that the publication of Mr. Froude's new book "Oceana," is as welcome as it is timely. Written in an easy style, and filled with the pleasant chit-chat peculiar to books of travel, it incidentally throws much light on the question of Imperial Confederation, and the present condition of the Colonies. But first, a word as to the name "Oceana." It is borrowed from a work of the same name by the great political writer Sir James Harrington, who dedicated his book to Oliver Cromwell. Harrington's *Oceana* is a description of an ideal republic, and in this respect it resembles Plato's *Republic* and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. Harrington, however, takes occasion to indulge in a prophecy as to the future greatness of the British people; and it is this feature which has led Mr. Froude to adopt the name "Oceana."

In December, 1884, the author left England, on a tour around the world, in which he visited Cape Colony, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, and the United States. The result of that trip is the book "Oceana." One most important colony of Britain, Mr. Froude, for a very insufficient reason, did not visit. While at Buffalo he looked out, saw the waters of Lake Erie skirted with broken ice, and concluded not to tempt the rigors of an arctic clime by entering Canada. Had he been less timid, he might have met with many an agreeable surprise, even in the matter of climate; and Canada might have received her due share of encomium from his facile pen. As it is, he is most enthusiastic when describing Australia, "where the people are busy with their own affairs, and the harbors are crowded with ships, and the quays with loading carts, and the streets with men; where every one seems occupied, and everyone at least moderately contented."

Mr. Froude points out the change which has come over the views of English statesmen respecting the importance of the colonies to Britain. After mentioning several amusing instances of ignorance concerning the colonies on the part of former statesmen, the author says:—"The temper represented in this cool indifference is passing away. The returns of trade show, in the first place, that commerce follows the flag. Our colonists take three times as much of our productions, in proportion to their number, as foreigners take. The difference increases, rather than diminishes, and the Australian, as a mere consumer, is more valuable to us than the American. What more he can be, his voluntary presence at Suakim has indicated for him to all the world." His summing up of the arguments for and against Imperial Federation is as follows:—

"The wish will be its own realization. Two pieces of cold iron cannot be welded by the most ingenious hammering; at white heat they will combine of themselves. Let the colonies say that they desire to be permanently united with us; let the people at home repudiate as emphatically a desire for separation, and the supposed difficulties will be like the imaginary lion in the path—formidable only to the fool or the sluggard. No great policy was ever carried through which did not seem once impossible. Of all truly great political achievements the organization of a united British Empire would probably be found the easiest."

In schools and colleges there is a rapidly growing tendency to allow the learner to choose his own course. It is found that different minds have different aptitudes, and it is thought best to allow each individual to decide what subjects he can study to advantage. As far as advanced college work is concerned, the principle is a good one, because the college student is tolerably capable of judging. But boys are often allowed by their indulgent parents to omit work which is of the highest importance, on the specious plea that they have no liking for it. A great deal they know about it! Their parents are only telling them take the primrose way to weakness of will and one-sidedness of culture.