

COLONIAL RELATIONS.

THE recent discussions in the House of Commons on Canadian affairs, were taken advantage of by several members, to utter sentiments rather insulting to this country. This is not the first time we have had cause to complain on this score; indeed, this mode of alluding to their Colonies seems to be getting rather fashionable among a certain class of British politicians. The particular occasion which called forth the utterances we at present allude to, was the consideration of the bill to guarantee the interest on the cost of the Intercolonial Railway. Such men as Mr. Lowe, Mr. Aytoun and Mr. Cave, seized the opportunity to allude to British America, not only in a manner highly unjust and objectionable, but, in our opinion, disgraceful to themselves.

In asking Great Britain to guarantee four per cent. interest on the cost of the Intercolonial Railway, the Colonial Ministers only asked what the British Government had more than once promised. It is no great boon. In granting it, the Imperial Treasury runs little or no risk. This country has never failed to meet obligations. Whatever we have undertaken to pay, has always been paid at the day and at the hour. We did not ask the House of Commons to pay a sixpence on our behalf. All we solicited was a simple "endorsement" of our securities, which, without costing the Mother Country one cent, would enable us to effect a saving on interest of some £60,000 per annum. Under these circumstances, we consider the impertinences of Mr. Lowe and his backers very much out of place, and calculated to create feelings of alienation and ill-will between the people at home and in this country.

Possibly the leading Statesmen thought that the best rubbing for the Adullamite chief, was to vote down the amendment to the bill by an overwhelming majority, which was certainly done. But it has not escaped Colonial notice, that Mr. Gladstone, who spoke in favour of the bill, did not resent the unjust language of Mr. Lowe towards us, nor did any leading Conservative do so. On former occasions, such attacks have been answered by the chief party leaders, and it has occasioned not a little remark here that with the exception of Mr. Watkins, the principal Colony of Her Majesty seemed to be without a defender. The overwhelming vote in favour of the guarantee may have been thought sufficient rebuke for the anti-Colonial Members, but Her Majesty's subjects in Canada had a just right to expect more.

The burden of the attack upon British America was, that we should be made to undertake our entire defence, for which purpose the British troops ought to be withdrawn; that we meanly sought to throw taxes upon the people of the Mother Country which we ought to bear ourselves; and some even went so far as to decry Confederation as being a futile attempt to establish a new nation in opposition to the United States, and insinuated pretty plainly that they (the speakers) would as soon be rid of us altogether as not! These are the sentiments of the Goldwin Smith School who would dismember the British Empire and reduce it to a third-rate power. These are certainly not the opinions either of the great bulk of British Statesmen or of the British people; but we must in all candour place on record our opinion, that if Canada is to be thus systematically sneered at and insulted in the House of Commons, and that without adequate re-luke, Goldwin Smith will soon not be without supporters on this side of the water.

This sneering at Canada in Parliament and in the press, means one of two things. It means either that pressure is sought to be put upon Canada to force us into a new Colonial connection, in which we will have to do more, and the Mother Country less, than in the past; or, it means that a desire exists to egg us on to sever the connection between the two countries. Unless we are to suppose that these attacks are simply ebullitions of ill-nature, we think they must arise from one of these two causes. Now, we contend that whichever of these causes be the true one, attacking us after the manner of Messrs. Lowe, Aytoun and Cave, is neither sensible nor decent. If a change in our relations with the Mother Country is desired, let the Home Government state what that change is. The people of Canada do not wish to shirk any obligation or duty devolving upon them as a part of the Empire. We are willing to do anything reasonable. But we most emphatically protest against being continually lectured and traduced without our ever having failed to perform any duty devolving upon us in consequence of our Colonial position.

The desire to continue connection with the British

Crown, is almost universal throughout our country. This feeling is one of loyalty, and the effect of sneers to the effect that it arises from "self-interest," may easily be understood. We feel the charge to be utterly unjust, and our resentment is excited accordingly. If Imperial Statesmen want us to do more for our defence, let them manfully say so, and we will consider their representations. If they wish to use Mr. Lowe's unfair remark, that Great Britain should separate from her Colonies because they wish to tax her, as the American Colonies once separated from her as she wished to tax them, the sooner we know that, too, the better. We hope and believe neither the people of England nor Canada desire separation. But, in any event, let these unjust attacks on Canada cease, so that if this country ever does enter upon a new political existence, we may continue to love and reverence Great Britain, and not separate with feelings of resentment and hate such as actuated our fellow-colonists of ninety years ago.

IT LOOKS WELL!

WE refer to the fall wheat crop of Ontario. The writer has lately had an opportunity of seeing some of the best wheat producing districts of the Western province, and has no hesitation in saying that seldom has the winter wheat escaped with less damage from the rigours of our climate. Last spring at this time, the prospect was not near so good as this year. The frosts of the previous winter had damaged the wheat considerably and "bare spots"—the dread of the farmers—were by no means uncommon. This spring far less appears to have been winter-killed. Here and there, of course, patches of land can be seen where some damage has been sustained; but taking the sections generally which we have seen, we have little hesitation in saying that the fall wheat seldom comes through the winter in better order than it has this year. This is rather singular, inasmuch as in some parts of the Western peninsula snow did not fall in sufficient quantities to cover the fields and afford protection from the frosts, until after the New year came in. During this time, it was feared the wheat would suffer; it is therefore exceedingly gratifying to know that the growing crops seldom ever looked better so early in the spring and that there is at present every prospect of a bountiful crop in the fall. We do not wish those of our readers who are engaged in agriculture, nor those in commercial and other pursuits, whose success is closely connected with that of the farming community, to take it for granted from what we have said, that we are certain our next harvest will be unusually large. There are nearly four months to come and go before the grain will be ready for the sickle. During that period the wheat has to run the gauntlet of several enemies, and it will be almost a miracle if it entirely escapes injury from some of them. All we can say is—and we think our statement will apply to Ontario generally—that the fall wheat has not suffered so much from the winter as during the previous one, that the plant looks strong and luxuriant, and considering the backwardness of the spring, promises exceedingly well. Then by remembering that we reaped a good harvest last fall, notwithstanding the rather unfavourable appearance of the wheat in the Spring, we come to the belief that, if nothing unusual occurs during May and June, we will reap a larger one during the present season. *Nous verrons.*

POSTAL REFORM.

SINCE Rowland Hill broached the subject of postal reform, and was laughed at as a visionary for his pains, the world has had ample opportunity of testing the far-sightedness and correctness of his views. There is probably no social reform of modern times, and certainly none during the present generation, which has been productive of more gratifying and beneficial results. The example set by England in adopting uniform and moderate rates of postage has been followed by almost the whole civilized world, and the advantages that have accrued to trade and commerce, as well as in the numberless communications of private life, can scarcely be over-estimated. Yet we are far from thinking that the goal has yet been reached, and believe that a good deal remains to be done before all the advantages of which the system is capable are fully developed. In England, perhaps, the establishment of the penny rate, and the cheap and

admirable money order system, leaves little to be desired; but the time has come when a great reduction in ocean postage might be advantageously made. In the internal postal arrangements of the British American Provinces especially, there is great room for improvement, and the establishment of the "Dominion" which will place the postal affairs of the Provinces under one department, affords a favourable opportunity for carrying out the much-needed reform. To begin. The existing rates of letter postage are far too high and there is little doubt that they could be materially reduced without sensibly impairing the revenue. On this head we have the experience of other countries to guide us. When postal reform was first inaugurated in England, a threepenny rate was tried, and so great was the advantage felt to be, that it only remained in force for about a year, when it was replaced by an uniform penny rate. This was not done without misgivings of the loss that might possibly accrue to the revenue, and in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's official estimates, provision was made for the anticipated deficiency; but it was never needed, and from that time to this the Post Office Department has gone on increasing in usefulness and efficiency, as well as in the amount of revenue it yields to the Government. Well, we contend that some such a result is pretty certain to follow a reduction of postage here. We are perfectly aware of the objections that will be urged against it. It will be said that the long distances to be traversed and the sparseness of the population, will prevent the result we anticipate, and that the man who objects or cannot afford to pay threepence for postage, is not likely to write at all, however low the rate may be. In the first of these objections there is some force, but it is one which improved means of communication and the increase of population will lessen every year, and nothing will help to bring about this result more than the very reform we are advocating. To the latter objection we demur altogether, as contrary to experience. Unless the inhabitants of British America are slow to comprehend and avail themselves of a great advantage and convenience, (which we cannot believe), the reduction of letter postage to two cents the half ounce, would start into being a vast amount of correspondence, which has now no existence whatever, besides securing much which is now carried on surreptitiously. Such has been the uniform result following the reduction of postage in other countries, and there is no reason to suppose that it would be different in this, and even if the revenue should suffer some loss, the great and manifest good to the whole community would compensate it many times over.

As the internal money order system of Canada will probably be extended to the Maritime Provinces under Confederation, there is not much to be said on that head, except that to secure its more general adoption the rates might be advantageously reduced; but with regard to orders on Great Britain there is great room for improvement. We find that in Nova Scotia a money order on Great Britain for £10 sterling costs fourpence, while in Canada and New Brunswick an order for the same amount costs one dollar. We should like to know what the experience of the Nova Scotia office is of the cheaper rate, because if favourable, there can be no good reason why it should not be generally adopted.

There must also be a revision of the newspaper postage. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, newspapers pass through the post free. In Canada a postage is charged, now this we think is altogether wrong, and that considering the great services rendered to the state and community at large by the press, and the highly important part it performs in the political education of the people, newspapers should be carried free. It is certain that the press of the Maritime Provinces, which is by no means insignificant either in numbers or ability, will strenuously oppose the imposition of postage upon them, and will be ready to make common cause with their Canadian contemporaries on the subject. It may be thought by some that in this report we speak interestedly, but to this we answer that the public is interested in a far greater degree than the press. We may be quite sure that if a newspaper has to pay postage, it must either charge a higher rate to its subscribers, or else some portion of its usefulness must be impaired. Besides the amount of revenue involved cannot be large, and, as has been already shown the Maritime Provinces have no newspaper postage. It will therefore simply be a question of whether they shall come under the present Canadian system, or whether in this respect Canada shall give place to them. We certainly think that every