

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 18, 1886.

## INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

In its issue of May 7th, the *Monetary Times* of Toronto in referring to the efforts of Mr. Hugh Sutherland, M.P., for the construction of the Hudson's Bay railway, has the following on the independence of parliament:

"Public opinion is beginning to pronounce adversely to members of parliament being interested in railways which receive grants of public land. At present there is nothing in the law to prevent it, and the question has arisen out of some incidents, real or supposititious, connected with the Northwest Central Railway. It is possible that, in future, the Independence of Parliament Act may be so amended as to exclude members of parliament from public companies which receive aid, in any form from the legislature. Such a measure, if proposed, would probably encounter no opposition from any quarter."

We have no wish to make this instance of Mr. Sutherland and the Hudson's Bay road a special argument in favor of amending the Independence of Parliament Act, not being either so much interested in, or anxious for obstructing this project, as the *Monetary Times* has so frequently shown itself of late. Nor indeed can we see anything in the terms of the charter which would indicate any special blunder on the part of the Dominion House in granting this charter to one of its own members. As yet it has shown up none of the ugly features rumored about the Northwest Central road, and had the scheme ever disclosed a wide field for plunder for "the boys," it is not likely that Mr. Sutherland and his colleagues would have got the charter so easily through the Dominion Parliament.

But there is undoubtedly wisdom in the amending of the Independence of Parliament Act as shadowed by our Toronto contemporary, and with the passing of such legislation there is no part of the Dominion which would be more benefited than Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The older provinces of Canada own their own lands and other natural resources, and consequently are in a position to grapple with their own public works undertakings without submitting to the meddling of Ottawa politicians. With the province and the ter-

ritories beyond it is quite different. We are allowed to own and administer none of our lands or other natural resources, and when any public work is undertaken here, Ottawa politicians vote the payment mainly from resources here, and as experience has shown, take care to look after their own interests when so doing. The fact that the Hudson's Bay railway charter is out of the clutches of eastern politicians and in the hands of Northwestern men is one of the greatest mysteries of Ottawa legislation, and can only be accounted for by the supposition that when granted these eastern politicians believed it to be of no value, and merely a charter for an imaginary road. We say it is a mystery, for with the exception of this charter the history of the Northwest since confederation does not furnish another public works undertaking therein, in which eastern interests were not the first, and Northwestern merely a secondary consideration, if considered at all. Any amendment thereof, which would shut out the interference in our public works of members of parliament, who have no interest in this country beyond the desire to make profit out of such interference, would be a change for the better, in so far as it would put a check upon political "backsheesh," and would doubtless leave a field for the enterprise and capital of men better fitted to grapple with great public undertakings, than are the bulk of our Dominion M.P.'s, and especially that class who are most ready to secure and peddle a charter.

But the principle of complete independence need not be confined to the Dominion Parliament, for it can be carried with profit into provincial legislatures, and with telling effect into our Manitoba one. An expensive Royal commission has recently been at work in this province to wash out the filth thrown, deservedly or undeservedly upon the leader of the Government in power. As in all such muddles a great share of the mud piled upon Mr. Norquay was probably without foundation in fact. But with an absolute independence of the Local Legislature, which would prevent the use of names of prominent politicians for joint stock booming purposes, Mr. Norquay nor no other member of that house could be made even a dupe of schemers, and the late Royal Commission would never have been necessary. But when we find the name of the Premier of a province on the directorate of a coal-

mining company, which commenced operations with about \$4,500 of cash resources, and in a little over a year reached insolvency with liabilities of about \$60,000; or on the directorate of a gold mining company, which has sunk thousands upon thousands of dollars secured from the sale of stock certificates, and which has never yielded one dollar of returns, but has sunk all in digging a big hole in the ground to which it holds no title, fitting up offices, and supplying printed matter and stationery, we must expect that the mass of people who take only a superficial view of such matters will expect that "there is something rotten in Denmark." If therefore the independence of the Dominion Parliament is made so absolute that the names of members can be accepted and used only as men who serve their country purely for the remuneration their country allows them, then by all means let the principle be extended to Provincial Legislatures, for it is certainly much needed.

## A GREAT SCHEME.

The *Toronto Globe* has been getting its name up of late for crank correspondents, some of whom have shown themselves rather mischievous as well as erratic, as for instance Mr. Conant with his famous letter on the Northwest. But perhaps the most ecstatic crank who has yet scribbled for the columns of that journal, is one who has recently written under the heading of this article. The "Great Scheme" this correspondent has got so impressed upon his narrow and biased mind is as yet only in the intentions of Senator John Sherman of Ohio, who thinks of placing before the two houses of Congress a huge railroad undertaking, which includes a great trunk line connecting the United States with all the republics of Central and Western South America down south we suppose to the wilds of Patagonia, from which both eastward and westward at convenient distances branches will be run to the Atlantic and Pacific shores.

The financial success of this monster undertaking the *Globe* correspondent never for a moment questions, but swallows the whole affair with a firm belief in the financial omnipotence of Senator John Sherman, an ex-Secretary of the United States treasury. But the sucking capacity of this ecstatic mortal does not end here, for he jumps to the conclusion that with