

ANTE-ELECTION expectations were very misleading in some instances, and none more so than in the case of Nova Scotia. A few months ago the Liberals made a clean sweep of that province in the local elections, to the great delight of the party, who looked forward to a similar result in the Dominion elections. So strongly was Nova Scotia counted on for the Liberals, that some papers would only concede one or two seats to the Government. But what a surprise has been the result? Nova Scotia, secession and all, solid for the Government! To account for this entire failure of forecasts has been the puzzler to politicians. Various theories have been advanced, and here is another one not previously noted, which may help to solve the question. A few days before the election the *Halifax Chronicle*, the leading Liberal organ of Nova Scotia, published a villainous looking portrait, alleged to be a representation of Hon. Edward Blake. It is just possible that the herring-backs accepted the cut as a faithful copy of the Liberal leader, and rather than place an apparent ex-convict at the head of the country, they voted Conservative. The *Chronicle* should be suppressed.

ONE of the most hotly contested elections in Canada during the late contest, was that in the city of Winnipeg. It was nip and tuck throughout, and the winner only got there by a dozen votes. Canada was ransacked from one end of the country to the other, for absentee voters, and several points in the United States sent in their quota. The outside votes were nearly all plumped for the successful candidate, otherwise the majority would have been considerably the other way. Had the vote been confined to residents of the city, Mr. Sutherland would undoubtedly have secured a small majority, notwithstanding that he had to contend against the host of both Dominion and Local Government politicians and officials who have their headquarters at Winnipeg. Mr. Sutherland has every reason to feel proud of the very large vote of bona fide residents of the city which he polled. Money is said to have been spent very freely, and there is quite a possibility that Mr. Scarth may not be allowed to take his seat. A number of his supporters have already been charged with acts of bribery of a very serious nature, which will be ventilated in the courts. Mr. Scarth personally has an enviable reputation for honesty and integrity of character, and it is to be hoped that any unlawful acts, if committed by his agents, were done without his knowledge and consent.

THE Interstate Commerce bill promises soon to be brought in force throughout the United States. Many of the individual states have adopted the principle of the bill into the state railway legislation. In Iowa, the railway commissioners have been dealing with a case where in the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railway company charged more on coal for a shorter haul than it did for a longer haul. The railway company claimed that the rate for the long haul was a very low one, but they were obliged to make it owing to active competition. It was further represented that in the case of the shorter haul to Glenwood, the cars had to be

returned empty, whereas in the longer haul to Council Bluffs, such was not necessary. The commissioners decided that to allow a different rule for local freight would throw all the inequalities, of which so much complaint has been made, upon domestic commerce, to which we cannot consent. The commissioners are satisfied that the section will be engrafted into the state legislation and that the question may as well be met now as any time. With this view, the commissioners would advise the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railway to revise its tariff to comply with the provisions of the interstate commerce bill. There seems to be a pretty general move on the part of the railways to accept the new measure. Already several councils of railway officials have been held, with a view to make arrangements to meet the requirements of the bill. In the case of some railway companies, it is claimed that the Interstate Commerce Bill is really favorable to them. At a recent meeting of the Pennsylvania Railway Co., it was generally conceded that the measure was very favorable to that company. Of course this is an exceptional case, and as a rule the introduction of the bill will undoubtedly reduce local traffic rates, and perhaps increase through rates.

A GREAT deal of discussion has been going on in the Canadian press of late in regard to the public debt. Widely varying estimates of the liabilities of the country have been presented, according to the political party tinge of the spectacles through which the figures were viewed. As enormous a difference as from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000 has been figured out between some of these alleged financial statements. The minimum amount of the public debt of the Dominion is of course displayed in the Government papers, Conservative organs usually placing the total, after deducting all assets, at \$190,000,000. On the other hand the Liberals generally figure the amount up to \$220,000,000. It is worthy of note that the *Toronto Mail* estimates the public debt of Canada at \$5,000,000 above Mr. Blake's showing. The *Mail* says:—"Our own belief is that it (the debt) is \$225,000,000. The difficulty of determining the exact figure arises from the fact that we still cling to the antiquated fashion of being a year behind with the Public Accounts. Assuming, however, that the net debt is only \$190,000,000 is it not time for us to seriously consider the situation?" The *Mail* believes that the debt is much more likely to increase than be diminished in the future, and points out a number of ways in which heavy calls will likely be made upon the Treasury. Quebec wants \$10,000,000 to expend in railways, for the development of her northern territory. Then there is the scheme which is being pressed in Ontario, for the assumption by the Dominion of the debenture debt of the municipalities, contracted in assisting railways, and which amounts to about \$13,000,000. There is also the expenditure in connection with the Indian and Police departments in the Northwest, which must go on increasing for some time. The *Mail* also classes the Hudson's Bay Railway among the undertakings for the carrying out of which recourse will be had to the Dominion treasury. The *Mail* doubtless believes (and justly too) that in

keeping with the general policy of the Dominion in aiding eastern roads by large cash subsidies, the Hudson's Bay road should also have a right to participate in a similar manner. The *Mail* thinks it is time to call a halt in our expenditure, and commence resolutely the work of reducing the public debt. It concludes as follows: "The cry that it is unpatriotic to examine such startling truths as these—that duty to country demands the suppression of everything unpleasant lest our credit abroad should be injured, is unworthy of Canadians. It is evident that to obtain new population and to retain our own people at home, the Dominion expenditure must be reduced somehow on a heroic scale. The reduction must be wholesale, systematic and fearless; but where is the man with nerve enough to wield a remorseless knife; and, above all, where is the party to cheer him on?"

THE bucket-shops get the blame for a great deal of the heaviness and depression which has been the ruling feature in wheat of late. It is claimed that the bucket-shops take the support from legitimate trading in the cereal, and that people who would otherwise buy the real stuff, now speculate purely on the rise and fall in prices through the bucket-shops. The contention looks reasonable enough. If the bulk of the purchases, which are given to the bucket-shops, were done in a legitimate way, it would certainly give a great stimulus to the markets. Gambling purchases in the bucket shops have no effect in stimulating the markets; whilst it is just so much support taken from them, providing the purchases would otherwise have been made in a legitimate way. The theory that grain prices are made in Liverpool cannot be said to apply with force to the present situation. Of late years British markets have shown a tendency to follow rather than lead American, and British buyers have abstained from purchasing on weak American markets. The theory that the bucket-shops are the cause of low prices is fast gaining adherents in the States, and in several quarters measures are being considered for the legal suppression of this huge system of gambling. In dealing with the subject, the *Chicago Daily Business* says: "At no time has it been more evident that the market needs the support of buying, which has been transferred to 'bucket-shops,' and until they are crushed it is doubtful if even a declaration of war would be responded to by an advance sufficient to gladden the hearts of the long-suffering bulls. With the trade now absorbed by them restored to legitimate channels, the stimulus of war and crop-damage reports would once again be felt in a marked degree, and instead of dull, listless markets, activity commensurate with the governing causes follow." The opinions expressed by *Daily Business* are generally endorsed by the commercial press, and with the dissemination of these views, a strong crusade against the bucket-shops may be expected.

The Government geological survey shows there is enough coal between Rocky Mountain House and Pitt to supply the Territories for all time.