

Neither Mr. Desjardins nor Mr. Cumberland can be blind to the fact that at the present time the annexation of their respective compatriots to the neighbouring republic is being effected rapidly, by piecemeal. Will they not suggest some way in which this debilitating drainage of the life-blood of the Dominion can be checked? So long as it continues, the development of an independent and consolidated Canada is a dream, and the future of Canada remains shrouded in the mists of uncertainty and dread.

WHETHER is the tendency to the consolidation of vast properties and enterprises, involving public interests of incalculable value, in the hands of private individuals and companies, carrying us and what is to be its limit? In the case of certain natural products, such as coal and oil, and in the case of certain great inventions and appliances, which have become practically things of necessity to the public, such as railways, telegraphs, telephones, gas and electric lights, etc., the conditions are obviously such as to forbid the operation of the law of competition, even were that law the beneficent power it has long been supposed to be. In all the cases indicated, and in many similar ones which will readily suggest themselves, there is at present a very marked tendency not only to the formation of practical monopolies but to the constant growth of these monopolies until the corporations to which they lead possess influence so great and gain control of capital so vast, that they are rapidly becoming the rulers of countries and peoples who flatter themselves that they are really self-governing. We need not go abroad for such familiar and monstrous examples as those afforded by the Standard Oil Company, or the recently compacted Reading Railroad combination of the United States, the one of which fixes, at its own sweet will, the price of oil for all the citizens of the United States and of Canada as well, and the other of which is just now engaged in the—to its stockholders—agreeable task of increasing the price of anthracite for the people of both countries. We have plenty of illustrations nearer home if we will but observe their workings—which may not as yet seem to afford much cause for complaint—and their possibilities. The possibilities are truly alarming to every one who will fully consider them, divesting himself for the moment of whatever faith he may cherish in the honour and conscience of the individuals composing the corporations, whose personnel is liable to perpetual change, under the operation of no law but that of self-interest.

OUR attention has been directed to the question raised in the foregoing paragraph by two Bills which have lately been before the Canadian Senate. The companies affected are the Bell Telephone Company, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The object, in each case, was to enable the Company in question to increase its already immense capital by a very large amount. The Bell Telephone Company has now, as everybody knows, a virtual monopoly of the telephone business in Canada. The public, so far as we are aware, is very well satisfied with the way in which it has thus far used its enormous advantage. The price at which it supplies its instruments is certainly very much lower than that which obtains across the border. The present authorized capital of the Company, in stock and bonds, is two million dollars. The Bill which was challenged a couple of weeks since, on its third reading in the Senate, by Senator Boulton, authorizes a large increase in this capital, though, strange to say, there was a difference of opinion amongst the Senators as to whether the effect of the Bill would be to fix the limit at five millions, or at ten millions of dollars. And yet this Bill had almost gone through unchallenged, and would have done so had not Senator Boulton taken the unusual course of raising a debate on the third reading. Whether the amount be fixed finally at one limit, or at the other, it is easy to see that it really involves the payment of dividends on a vastly increased capital and, as a matter of course, the raising of the money for such increase from the telephone-users of Canada. We are not saying, of course, that the enlargement of capital, or some part of it, may not be necessary, in consequence of the enlargement of the Company's operations. We are only noting a tendency, and asking our readers to make their own moral. A somewhat similar Bill in the interests of the Canadian Pacific Railway had already passed through the Senate a few days before, apparently without question or debate. Its main object and provision are to enable the Company to issue, from time to time, shares of stock, increasing its capital from the limit previously fixed at sixty-five millions

of dollars, to any extent whatever—such issue being first approved by the Governor-in-Council. Let the thoughtful reader place this Bill side by side with the announcement made a few days since, at the annual meeting of this Company in Montreal, that the net earnings of the road during the past year over and above all expenses were more than eight millions of dollars, of which about six millions were appropriated for payment of dividends, and draw his own conclusions. Of course every Canadian must rejoice in the prosperity of the road, if for no better reason than because the interests of the whole country are bound up in its operations. But where did this eight millions come from, save out of the hard earnings of the Canadian people, whose previous earnings to the extent of many times eight millions had really built the road. Suppose the Company to take advantage of its newly-gained powers to increase its capital to, say, one hundred millions. Can we believe that it will any longer be content with a paltry eight millions? Will not the temptation be well-nigh irresistible to increase its charges in order to enable it to pay a handsome dividend on its largely-increased stock? The increase is, it is true, under the control of the Governor-in-Council, that is, the Government. But it requires no undue stretch of the imagination to conceive of a possible Government, at some future day, not unwilling for purposes of its own, to repeat the Pacific Scandal Act with variations.

SOME discussion has arisen from the facts and figures given in the census bulletin recently issued which deals with the established industries of Canada, and very naturally the advocates of the present fiscal policy of the Dominion are not a little gratified in being able to point to the large percentages of increase in the number both of industrial establishments and of employes. On the other hand, an attempt is made to belittle the importance of these returns by casting doubt on the reliability of the statistics as evidence of genuine enlargement of manufacturing operations. An analysis of the tables furnished, with a view to ascertain the exact nature of the alleged growth, is of course not only legitimate, but necessary to an intelligent appreciation of the nature and value of the progress indicated. The fuller census returns will, no doubt, afford ample material for such analysis, at a later date. Without going into the difficult question of the respective values of different kinds of employments as evidences of progress, we may remark in passing that it is not clear that the multiplication of small local industries, of useful and necessary kinds, is not just as much a matter for congratulation and an evidence of progress, in proportion to the number of men and women employed, as an increase in the number of large establishments. The consideration which makes it impossible for us to feel much gratification at the showing of the bulletin is that, so far as we can see, any increase in the number of persons employed in the so-called industries, without a corresponding increase in the total population of the country, indicates merely a diversion of so many from one form of productive occupation to another. In so far as such change has been from the farm to the factory, and hence from the country to the city, it is but another indication of a tendency which is deplored by many and which is certainly creating one of the most perplexing of the social problems of the age. We are far from believing that the National Policy is wholly or even mainly the cause of this tendency in Canada. But that so far as it does affect the distribution of population its influence is in this direction cannot be doubted, and this is, in our opinion, one of the valid objections to a high protective tariff.

A HUNDRED years ago, it is said, the rural population of the United States comprised 90 per cent. of the whole, now it is but 60 per cent., and the proportion is still declining. No doubt the tendency is equally marked in Canada. As we have before said, we believe the main producing causes of this city-ward movement to lie much too deep to be radically affected by any change of conditions which can be wrought artificially, by either legislative or educational devices. The determining factors in the movement are the opening up of new and vast regions of great fertility to cultivation, and the large reduction in the proportionate amount of manual labour required, which is caused by the use of labour-saving machinery. To what extent the latter is the cause of the former, through having made cultivation on an immense scale possible and profitable, we need not stay to enquire. But it is evident that so long as the present conditions suffice for

the supply of the world's needs, in the way of food, at rates which are not sufficiently remunerative to develop undue competition, and which offer little encouragement for small farms and hand cultivation, so long will the bulk of the rural population be compelled to resort to the centres of population in search of the employment which they fail to find in the country. Thus far the old law of supply and demand will continue to rule.

THE foregoing remarks are in part suggested by an article which we have just been reading in the *Open Court*, on "Science in the Common School." The writer, Mr. E. P. Powel, bases his argument on the proposition that "If we are to have farmers, we must create farmers." If our reading of the problem is the correct one, it is the demand for farmers rather than the supply of them, which needs to be created. At the same time we should like to give, as applicable to our own country, a hearty seconding to the plea which Mr. Powel makes on behalf of the United States, for more science teaching, that is, more cultivation of the perceptive faculties of children in our educational processes. It is very likely that the intermingling of a reasonable proportion of elementary study of plant and animal life, of soils, rocks, water-courses, and other exercises which lead to the careful observation of "those things which are underfoot and all about" the dweller in the country, might tend materially to cultivate a taste for rural pursuits. It is certain that it would help to make public school education more symmetrical, by developing a side of the mental nature which is now too much neglected, and which exclusive attention to "the three R's" and related subjects, tends rather to dull and deaden. There is also much to be said for Mr. Powel's suggestion that there should be in every college and university a professorship of Agriculture. In either common school or college all such teaching will be comparatively barren and perfunctory apart from actual observation and experiment on a suitable plot of ground, set apart for the purpose.

FROM England comes the pitiful cry of the "National Union of Clerks," pointing the same moral, that of the necessity of modifying the courses of instruction in the public schools, with a view to the amelioration of the condition of a class whose condition has become pitiable by reason of the immense preponderance of supply over demand. In this case, as in the others touched upon, it is wholly out of the power of any change which can be wrought in the subjects and processes of school education to remove the taproot of the evil, yet it is clear that the one-sidedness of the courses in the schools does not a little to stimulate the growth of that evil by fostering the competition which is its immediate cause. The condition of the clerks is truly deplorable. "There is hardly any salary so small that it will not be accepted by somebody. Consequently, clerks are paid ill, worked hard, housed in a very unsanitary fashion, and told, if they venture upon a remonstrance, that there are young men and women in abundance waiting to step into the very shoes of which they complain." Even in Canada, notwithstanding its sparse population and the ever open outlet in the great labour market across the border for the overplus of supply, there are, we have no doubt, if the facts were known, hundreds and thousands of cases in which clerks of the less skilled classes are holding on with the energy of despair to situations in which the pittance received as salary hardly suffice to supply the bare necessities of life. We ourselves have in mind a case in which a man in middle life, having a family to support, and being now incapable of turning to any other pursuit, is working almost day and night to retain a position which barely suffices to keep the wolf from the door, and who yet is in constant dread lest his close-fisted employer may be tempted either to further cut down his salary or discharge him off-hand in order to take advantage of the offers which are being from time to time made him by young men, without "encumbrances," who are mean enough to seek to get the place by underbidding. We cannot doubt that the instance is one of many. If the case be so in Canada, we can easily imagine what it must be in the congested cities of England. At the recent meeting of the "Union" in Hyde Park, the burden of the complaint of the few who came together to discuss the situation—the *Spectator* intimates that the masses of clerks did not attend because they have not sufficient energy to attend an open-air meeting, "their case is so hard and they are so helpless"—was that the education given in the schools was exactly and exclusively of the