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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE annual banquets of the Toronto Board of Trade, the second of which passed off with so much *eclat* the other evening, bid fair to become occasions of provincial as well as of local importance. The presence on this occasion of His Excellency the Governor-General, the Premiers of the Dominion and of Ontario, and the Minister of Finance, as honoured guests, gave to the affair a kind and degree of dignity to which as a mere reunion of the members of a city organization it could not otherwise have attained. The limitations necessarily imposed by the presence of members and guests representing diverse opinions on public questions deprived the speeches of much of the interest that might otherwise have attached to the utterances of men occupying the highest and most influential positions. But even this disadvantage—if it be regarded as such—was not without its compensations. Chief among them was the fact that it tended to bring into clear and emphatic prominence those features of opinion and policy on which the great majority of the public men and the great mass of the people of Canada are at one. The ring of the national sentiment in regard to what seems, for some reason or other, to have become the great question of the day, was unmistakable. Canada for Canadians and Canadians for Canada was the clear refrain running through all all the divers tones of the speeches. No surrender of the dream of a grand Canadian future; no merging of whatever is distinctive in Canadian character and institutions in those of another nation! On the contrary, the freest and fullest development of Canadian individuality along the lines marked out by Nature, history and the will of a strong-willed people! Alike in the speech of Lord Stanley, whose text was on this, as it has been on other occasions since he came among us, "Keep Dominion above all"; in those of Sir John A. Macdonald, who was naturally pretty well satisfied with things as they have been and are, and Mr. Mowat, who thinks the Constitution he helped to frame capable of improvement, and the loyalty of the country able to stand the strain of freer commercial intercourse with our neighbours; and of the representatives of war, commerce, the railways, finance and civic authority,

the same key-note of confidence in ourselves, our resources, our national future, was predominant.

LORD STANLEY'S allusion, at the Board of Trade Banquet, to the great development in these modern times of the principle of voluntary association, suggests some interesting questions with reference to the legitimate sphere and scope of such associations. The Boards of Trade in the Mother Country have, as Lord Stanley reminds us, for some time past given valuable assistance to the Government in various ways. In Canada similar organizations are naturally exerting a growing influence in public affairs, and bid fair, eventually, almost to mould legislation in regard to the matters coming within their purview. This seems right enough in itself considered. The members of these boards are in the very best position to judge what is expedient in such matters. Lord Stanley's words, however, naturally suggest other kinds of voluntary association, of still more modern origin, such as the "trusts," or "combines," whose operations are not usually considered so beneficial to the general public. In regard to these, too, it is true that men "can act more wisely collectively than singly." Their members generally protest that "they are forced to combine in the interests of (their own particular) trade or commerce." It will often happen, naturally enough, that the members of the general boards of trade are also connected with the smaller organizations. Where and on what principle can the line of demarcation be drawn between the two, so as to insure that the influence of the one will be salutary though that of the other may be intensely selfish? Can the Boards of Trade be trusted to suggest proper legislation to restrict the operations of the particular "trusts" or "combines," while some of the prominent members of the former may be also the leading spirits of the latter? Such questions will arise in many minds. The answer must no doubt be sought in the fact that the Boards of Trade are comprehensive in composition and aim. From the great variety of distinct, often apparently conflicting, interests which they represent must spring the breadth of view and the balanced impartiality which give them their claim to public confidence. The day may not be far distant, let us hope, when the representation of various industries in one class of labour organizations may give these bodies a corresponding claim to public confidence, and a corresponding influence in public legislation. The one set of institutions seems to be the natural and necessary complement of the other.

THE St. John *Sun*, the leading Conservative paper in the Province of New Brunswick, has become disgusted with the operation of the Dominion Franchise Act, and argues forcibly that "the sooner the multitudinous franchises are swept off the statute book," and a simpler and sounder principle substituted, the better. One or two other influential papers supporting the Dominion Government have, we believe, expressed the same view. This is encouraging. The enormous expense attending the present cumbrous system could be justified only on the ground of high necessity, and seeing how nearly it approximates to a simple manhood suffrage, no such necessity can be shown to exist. As the *Sun* says, "The qualifications are so various and so moderate that few responsible persons are excluded, except through change of residence or by reason of confusion, misunderstanding, or neglect on their part, or the blunders of revisors, or the failure to revise the list. A much simpler, and therefore better, way of arriving at the result aimed at by the Franchise Act would be to give adult males the right to vote, and to make special exceptions of paupers, criminals, lunatics, tramps, or other classes whom it might be deemed desirable to exclude." Why should not every Member of Parliament, on either side of the Speaker, say "Amen" to this? If any are still wedded by conviction to the principle of a property qualification, they must see that it is now too late for that. The Government measure has carried us to the very verge, as we have said, of giving the franchise to every respectable adult male citizen, and retrogression in such a case is impossible. The only practicable reform now lies in the direction of substituting a simple, straightforward, inexpensive Act in place of the complicated and vexatious one, which such decisions as that in the Haldimand case have now made almost ridiculous.

PREMIER MERCIER'S remark in his speech at the meeting of the National Club, to the effect that his deprivation of the services of the Hon. James McShane would not be for long, has an ominous ring. It might fairly be understood to mean that the judgment of the election court would be over-ridden by an Act of the Local Legislature. Such a course would be one to be deprecated in the strongest terms, as tending to neutralize the effect of the Acts designed to secure purity of elections and make a farce of the judgment of the court. If, however, it is Mr. Mercier's intention merely to bring in a Bill giving a right of appeal in election cases to a higher court, the proceeding will be much less objectionable. Indeed, there seems no good reason why the subjects of sentences so severe as that recently pronounced in the case of Mr. McShane, and that imposed some time since in the case of Mr. Whyte, should not have the right of appeal, in common with citizens convicted of other grave offences. In order to be of service to the parties named it would be necessary that the Bill granting the right of appeal should be made retro-active, but, under the circumstances, the aim being not to reverse a judgment or remit a penalty, but merely to secure a new trial, such a provision would perhaps be free from some of the weighty objections which ordinarily lie against *ex post facto* legislation.

HOWEVER opinions may differ in regard to the paramount importance of securing better commercial relations with the great Republic on our borders, all Canadians must earnestly hope that the efforts now being made by the Government, as described in the speech of the Minister of Finance, for the extension of trade with the West Indies, South America, our fellow-colonists at the Antipodes, and the great nations of the East, may be in the highest degree successful. To refer to a single point, it must seem very surprising to those who take the trouble to reflect on it for a little, that we know so little of the teeming peoples of the central and southern portions of our own continent, and have so little to do with them. From recent statistics it appears that the United Kingdom exports annually to Mexico, Central and South America, and the West Indies, no less than forty-six and a half millions of dollars' worth of cotton fabrics alone. In regard to the Argentine Republic, to which Mr. Foster particularly referred, Senator Vest of Missouri quoted the other day, in a speech in the United States Senate, some figures from the report of Mr. Curtis, who was Secretary of the South American Commission, which illustrate forcibly the growing capacity for commerce of that progressive State. According to Mr. Curtis' figures, Buenos Ayres, a city of half a million people, has one bank with \$40,000,000 capital, another with eight million, another with five million. The Republic has now twenty-one banks. Four years ago there were but seven. Some of the twenty-one have been paying ten to fifteen per cent. dividends, besides "carrying forward" very large sums to reserves, so it is not wonderful that the business is stimulated. The city has magnificent public buildings, with Universities, libraries, and all the comforts and improvements of modern life. There are twenty-three lines of steamships running to Buenos Ayres from European countries. The Argentine Republic imports \$100,000,000 of manufactured goods yearly, one-third from England and one-fifth each from France and Germany. There is evidently a rich and almost inexhaustible field for Canadian commerce within the bounds of our own hemisphere. How best to get access to that field and cultivate it to the fullest extent, is a problem well worth the study of both Government and Boards of Trades.

ACTING in accordance with the opinion of the Supreme Court, the Railway Committee of the Privy Council has promptly given authority to the Manitoba Commissioner of Railways to cross two of the branches of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Though the decision has been postponed in regard to two other points at which crossings are desired, there is little doubt that these crossings, too, will be arranged for. Though the solicitor of the Canadian Pacific would not permit that Company to appear as a consenting party, and thus reserved its right to take further proceedings in court, it seems now highly improbable that any further obstruction will be offered, and almost impossible that, if offered, it can be successful.