

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to his journal. Our readers are capable of forming or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Government of Western Australia are said to be favorably disposed towards an extensive scheme of emigration to the Colony.

The habit of tea-drinking must be growing on the English people. During the last fiscal year the receipts from taxes on tea greatly increased, while the taxes on alcoholic liquors fell off \$950,000, and on wine, \$465,000.—*New York Tribune.*

Germany is booked for a heavy expenditure to further the defense of the empire. All the trunk lines of railway are to be double-tracked, and new stations and platforms built, with a view of entraining and detraining of troops. Bismarck is always on the "qui-vive" for eventualities, and Bulanger will never catch the old man napping.

The news that the Russians had moved the pillars on the Afghan boundary which had been set up, by the joint commission, and that the Russian agents were busily intriguing in the bazaars at Herat, although lacking official confirmation, is generally regarded as true. Russia means to have Herat, and she will have it too, despite promises, treaties or stone bars.

The native warriors in Sierra Leone are not quite satisfied to have the country controlled by white men. They recently, under the leadership of three dusky leaders, undertook to destroy the British settlement on the Beach River, but after four days' desperate fighting they retired, an English boat having made its appearance. Sierra Leone has always been regarded as one of Britain's most peaceful colonies, but even there the spirit of home rule appears to have taken root.

Does it ever occur to those in authority in Halifax that the stoppage of water supply for non-payment of taxes is a public nuisance? We believe, of course, that every householder should be forced to pay his taxes, but the stoppage of the water supply, while the householder is raising the money, is not the only method by which the payment of the tax could be assured. The family whose water supply is cut off must get it somewhere, and are obliged to impose upon the good-nature of their neighbors. Were this all, the present system might answer well enough, but with the stoppage comes the inevitable disarranging of drainage, and the effects of this are as apt to be felt in the houses of friendly neighbors as in that of the delinquent. Why should not the lien law for the general taxes of the city be applied to water rates? Let Councillor See-to-it speak.

Several persons who have been cut down while hanging have related their experiences, all of which go to show that suspension in the air with a rope fastened round their neck is not altogether an unpleasant sensation. The rescued ones all speak enthusiastically of the glorious panorama of colors which floated before their mind's eye before consciousness was lost. This is all very beautiful in its way, but such experiences are not to be courted, even if the outlook for the time being is brilliant.

It is pleasing to note that when the estimates were being passed in the House of Commons for the items of expenditure for the office of High Commissioner of London, Mr. Peter Mitchell, a member of the Opposition, frankly acknowledged the services rendered to Canada by Sir Charles Tupper. This is one of the hopeful signs of the times, and may be taken as indicating a desire on the part of opposing politicians to allow the non-partizan position of High Commissioner to escape the general mud-throwing.

The Barrister's Society of Halifax should take a leaf from the book of the London Solicitors' Association as to the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. The latter society is giving a handsome dinner in the Central Hall of the Law Courts, to which are invited one thousand professional cousins residing in the country. The legal fraternity in Nova Scotia would doubtless be quite willing to be fully represented at a royal jubilee banquet provided by Halifax lawyers. The Doctors might follow suit, and the Press,—Ah, no, we are always deadheaded, if quick-witted, at public dinners.

It has been suggested that the Royal Society of Canada, instead of holding each regular annual meeting at Ottawa, should vary the programme by holding its sessions in other cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, etc. It has also been recommended that the time of meeting be changed from the month of May to September. These changes would certainly tend to popularize one of Canada's most useful societies, and, if possible, they should be carried out without unnecessary delay. Speaking of the advantages which result from associations holding their meetings in different places, reminds us of a laughable incident which took place some years ago at a meeting of the Church of England Synod in this city. Several members had been urging upon the Synod the advisability of the Synod's meeting at Charlottetown, Windsor, etc., when one reverend gentleman, fully impressed with the advantages which would result, rose in his place to point out that before Jumbo was brought to America, Jumbo was practically an unknown elephant, but since that time Jumbo had been the admiration of thousands of persons in all the cities and towns to which he had been taken. So, said the speaker, would it be with this Synod, etc.

Some comparisons have recently been drawn between the respective expenditures of Ontario and Nova Scotia on roads and bridges. Without going into any details the subject is suggestive of a question, whether the comparatively advantageous position of Ontario in this and cognate matters may not be partly due to a simpler and more definite organization of rural municipalities—"Township Councils" as they are there called. In Ontario, townships averaging, say ten miles square, sustain their own roads and do almost all the local taxation; and, when even a village attains certain dimensions or population, it may, and does, petition for separate municipal institutions, and becomes an "incorporated village" with its own Reeve and Councillors, being excised from the township of which it originally formed a portion. Sparseness of population may render more sharply defined municipal lines inexpedient in Nova Scotia, yet—passing to general representation—a system which unites, for electoral purposes, the actual capital of the Province with the County in which it stands, seems anomalous. Positive injustice too arises out of the peculiarity of the institutions. The village of Bedford has for some years groaned under an excessive school tax, the undue pressure of which on persons of small means has arisen from the option accorded by the law to the very richest proprietors, who also own town property, of paying their taxes in the City of Halifax. An action brought in the hope of remedying this injustice, went against the school trustees, and the unfortunate villagers were saddled with the costs, in addition to an impost already severe, owing to the erection of a new schoolhouse.

## WE STICK TO OUR MOTTO.

Most sensible men thoroughly appreciate independent opinion and readily concede the influence of a journal which adheres to the principle that the public weal is of greater importance than party success, and unhesitatingly commends or condemns without political bias methods or measures which tend to promote or diminish the general welfare of the people. THE CRITIC has honestly endeavored to live up to its motto—"The welfare of the people is the highest law," but in doing so it has laid itself open to the sneers of partisans, who oftentimes broadly hint that its independence has a strong political coloring, and that its opinions are always on the side of the party they oppose. We call attention to this fact merely to show