

stances, it can be truly said the Dominion is enjoying a large share of prosperity at the present time.

There is no longer doubt that this season's harvest has been a bountiful one, and the very high prices obtained for barley, potatoes, and other articles, with fair returns for our great staple, have filled the farmers' pockets pretty well. There is a very considerable amount of money in circulation at present, as the monthly bank exhibits attest. This arises not only from the customary expansion of circulation by our monetary institutions at this season of the year, to enable millers and produce dealers to forward our crops to market; but also from the large amount of capital owned by our people and seeking investment. Money may be said to be abundant for loans on real estate. This is a fact which is gratifying, but we are astonished that capitalists do not seek to invest more of it in manufacturing and other enterprises. These would return a larger profit than any interest which could be obtained, whilst they would contribute much more to the prosperity of the community, by increasing the price of property, the demand for labour, and the amount of capital in use. We anticipate that money will be comparatively plenty during the winter, and that the retail trade of the country will not find itself so hard pressed as during the same months of last year.

Last summer and fall, some rather reckless purchasing was done by many in the retail dry goods and grocery trades. Business fell off greatly during the season, and many were caught with unusually heavy stocks on hand. To these over-sanguine dealers—who had anticipated a flourishing business—then came a time of no little trouble, anxiety, and even alarm. Some few of them went by the board, as the bankruptcy records show; but the great bulk of them only learned a wholesome lesson. We believe we will be borne out by importers, when we say that this lesson has not been lost upon the Western trade, and that this season has witnessed more cautious buying. Stocks have been greatly reduced, and many have only purchased sufficient to keep their stocks from running down. Of course, there have been exceptions—but this description applies to the trade in general. Considering these circumstances, it is expected that retailers will not fee themselves so cramped as last winter, and that with smaller stocks and fewer liabilities accumulating, many of them, at least, will do a more profitable business.

We look during the winter for an active business. There is a large quantity of produce yet unsold. In many of the wheat districts, the farmers have evidently held back their grain in expectation of higher prices. With the snow and good sleighing, the granaries must be emptied. Lumbering operations promise to be active, and all the chief sources of production must be stimulated by the early commencement of the Intercolonial Railway, the road to Red River and other public enterprises. It would be folly to expect that all will do well during the winter, but we have every confidence that the Dominion, as a whole, will make substantial progress in wealth and prosperity.

#### LEGISLATION BEFORE THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THE Legislature of the Province of Ontario has now been in session about four weeks, and although the proceedings of the "collective wisdom" have not excited particular attention or interest, still many important measures have been brought forward. These measures do not owe their paternity to the Local Administration alone; several of the private members, particularly Edward Blake, Esq., Q.C., have submitted a number of very useful bills, which are almost certain to become the law of the land.

Taking the whole action of the Ontario Legislature into consideration, we hold it is justifying the expectations which were formed of it. There exists—as there ought to exist—an active opposition to the Ministry of the day; but there has been displayed in the House no factious opposition, whilst both parties are evidently in wholesome fear of an active public opinion. The public business has been carried on with such economy as almost lays the Premier open to the charge of meanness, whilst the kind of legislation which is popular in Ontario, is rapidly being placed on the statute book. Without expressing any opinion as to the merits or demerits of the existing government, we think the experience already had of the Ontario Legislature warrants the opinion that it will faithfully carry out the People's will, and fulfill its various duties with efficiency and economy.

The general tendency of the legislation now before the Provincial representatives at Toronto, is decidedly liberal and progressive. Old fog notions and prejudices are somewhat at a discount. The single chamber itself is rather a Democratic innovation; its legislation, whilst in general cautious and well-considered, partakes considerably of its own character.

Among the Ministerial measures is a new Election law. The principal new features are: the enactment that all the elections shall take place on the same day, and that improper and corrupt practices shall not hereafter be considered as felonies, but by fines. Any person falsifying a voter's list will be subject to a penalty of \$2,000; a fraudulent voter runs the same risk; other offences, such as committing an assault near the Polls, render the perpetrator liable to \$50 fine. The franchise is fixed at \$400 in cities, \$300 in towns, and \$200 in townships and incorporated villages. Whilst approving of the principle of making all the elections on the same day, we are free to confess it may lead to some inconvenience. In case some leading member of a government should lose his seat, he would be forced to retire from public life unless some member could be induced to resign—which is not generally a very creditable proceeding. If a few elections were held over, this difficulty might be overcome.

Since this Bill was introduced, the Premier (Mr. Sandfield Macdonald) has signified his acceptance of an amendment doing away with the necessity of members having any property qualification. It was at first proposed to reduce it from £500 stg. to \$2,000—but we think the Legislature has acted wisely in abolishing it altogether. Such has been the law of England for some years.

Mr. Richards' new Mining Bill is a great improvement upon the old one. The resolution passed by the House pledges it against any royalty or other tax upon Mining enterprise. We need not point out that the Commissioner of Crown Lands has turned a sharp corner since last Session; but the old adage says "it's never too late to mend." We hail with satisfaction this change to a liberal mining policy, and we trust its effect will soon be seen in the development of the mineral riches of the north shore of Lake Superior and other parts of the country. It is a pity that the Local Government did not adopt this policy last year, for the Mining Bill then passed certainly did much to check mining enterprise.

Mr. Blake has a very important measure before the House with regard to Juries. Should this Bill become law, Juries will be done away with in all cases except where one of the parties to the case demands the judgment of "twelve good men and true" upon the matter. In other words, the Judges of the Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, and County Courts, will hereafter settle all cases which come before them, unless when a Jury is demanded. "Trial by Jury" has deservedly a strong hold upon the public mind; but, after all, we think this law will be popular, for in many cases both litigants would rather have a clear headed Judge decide their case than twelve of their peers. And when litigants don't like that—then they can have a Jury by asking for it. We think the measure will become law.

The Government have a Bill—the principle of which has already been agreed to—disqualifying members of the Local Ministry from sitting in the House of Commons, and *vice versa*. This has evidently been submitted as a concession to those against Dual representation. The Opposition strongly contended that the principle of the Bill was good, but it did not go far enough. Dual representation, it was contended, should be abolished altogether. Mr. McKellar moved an amendment to this effect, but the House sustained the Ministry by 42 to 31. There can be no question of the fact that the feeling of Ontario is overwhelmingly against an individual occupying a seat in both the Local and Federal House, and the passage of a law to that effect is only a question of time, unless a change comes over the spirit of the people's dream.

The registration of births, marriages and deaths, is the subject of several Bills in the hands of private members. That of Mr. Pardee is probably the most complete, and after pruning by a committee, would prove useful. Statistics of this kind are most urgently needed, and it is to be hoped the Legislature will not adjourn without passing some of the Bills which propose to attain that desirable end.

Two important questions regarding Education have

been before the Chamber, although they did not come up as measures. One was the Upper Canada College question; Mr. Christie (Wentworth), having moved for a committee to consider the question. The Premier took ground in support of the College, and Mr. Christie's motion was disposed of by referring it to some general committee, which was considered as "killing off the enquiry." The other is a motion by Mr. Clarke, intended to continue State support to the Denominational Colleges. This motion has not been disposed of at the time of our writing; but the Premier is said to stand firm by the settlement of last year, and has unfurled the banner "no surrender." Many of his supporters take opposite ground in favor of the grants being continued, and the knowing ones—or those who think themselves such—believe that political trouble will yet grow out of it.

There are a great many other measures before the Legislature besides those we have noted, many of which will hardly escape during the "slaughter of the innocents," which usually takes place at the close of every Session. But those we have referred to, are among the most important, and will serve to give our readers some idea of the character of the legislation which Ontario is adopting. Whilst not approving of it all, we nevertheless think Quebec Legislature might do worse than take a leaf or two from Ontario's book, which promises to be a very creditable volume when completed.

#### AGE OF HUMBUG—NUMBER TWO.

NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE WHO WILL NOT SEE.

THE exposure which we made a few weeks ago of the affairs of the Dominion Telegraph Company, has created a very general interest in the subject, both among the Press and the Public. But no where has there been more concern than in the Board of Directors, whose good names were being used to foist the scheme on an unsuspecting public. They have had several meetings, and our previous article has been anxiously discussed. There has been a struggle between conflicting ideas. They are forced to give some credit at least to the truth of our charges, regarding Messrs. Snow, Reeve, Ryan & Co., and we believe would gladly rid themselves of all connection with these gentlemen, but to do this would be to make a most unmistakable confession of their gullibility. Such a confession is rather hard to make, for these gentlemen all bear the reputation of being shrewd business men, and to be victimised by a set of Yankee adventurers, who are simply duplicating a previous swindle, is rather too much. Besides it seems a natural conclusion for the outside shareholders and the public to draw, that if these Directors are of a material so easily misled, and made the tools of designing adventurers, they are not the most fit custodians of the half million dollars which their prospectus calls for.

To avoid a confession so damaging, and the result which would give it such point the directors have decided upon a middle course for the present. They will allow Messrs. Reeve & Ryan to defend themselves, but meantime retain them in the Company. This we take to be the policy of the Directors, judging from Mr. Cayley's letter which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* a few days since, (and which we copied,) in reply to our previous article.

We have always tried in this journal to avoid long or personal discussions, and we shall still endeavour not to depart from this rule. We have made certain statements regarding the "Dominion Telegraph;" we have seen nothing yet to refute them, and it is not therefore necessary to burden our readers with a lengthened reply to Mr. Cayley's two columns of generalities and charges against a rival Company. We are not apologists of the Montreal Company or its employees. These articles are written by one of our regular contributors, who is in no way connected with the Montreal Company, and who never exchanged a half dozen words with Mr. Allan. Neither were these articles suggested by officers of the Company. Our facts came to us in the usual way of business, and if the Directors had used the same channels of information which they usually employ when investigating the claims to confidence of other men, they would have found that the parties who were manipulating them were men in whose hands they were not safe.

We have never covertly or otherwise intended to convey the impression that the Directors desired to