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**Comments on the Cartoons.**



WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING?—No word in the English language better expresses the present political condition of Canada than this word *drifting*. It may boldly be affirmed that there is not a thoughtful, intelligent, disinterested patriot within our borders who can contemplate the facts and circumstances of the day without having at heart a sickening sense of the apathy and aimlessness which characterize both Government and people. That the country is practically ruled by one man would not so very greatly matter, if that man were known to be in the prime of his powers; keenly alert to the dangers of the State, distinguished for sound constitutional views, and actuated by high principles in all his doings; but nobody—not even the most fawning party sycophant—can claim that in any respect this description fits Sir John A. Macdonald. If Sir John is really a great and good statesman, he is missing a fine opportunity to prove it; and he is doing himself a great injustice by leading the country to suppose that he is more interested in the little details of partisan management than in the great matters entrusted to his care. A real statesman may sometimes move in a wrong direction, but he never *drifts*, as Sir John is doing now. And Laurier is in the same boat, as the representative of the Reform party—drifting, both of them, and Public Opinion fast asleep somewhere on the bank of the stream, apparently! To put it in perfectly plain language, what we mean is that Canada is at present in a most perilous situation, and neither Government, Opposition, nor people, seem either to know or care. Our debt is now about \$60 per head of the population, or \$300,000,000, and still piling up, while with lavish hands the public money—filched

from the pockets of the people by unequal, and in many cases unjust, taxation—is being scattered in the interest of party; Monopoly, in many forms, protected, if not created by our guardians, is crushing the life out of industry; the free voice of the people is smothered by legislation such as no people of British blood have ever before been known to submit to; bribery, boodling, and betrayal of trust—such as the resident American scallawag must blush to see—run riot at the capital; the Maritime Provinces declare for secession as a way of escape from tariff-slavery; the power of disallowance is abused to keep Manitoba under the heel of a railway syndicate, but is not availed of to save Quebec from an act incorporating the Jesuits; Ontario is as far as possible disfranchised on the one hand, and mercilessly robbed on the other; the Northwest Territories, instead of being nurtured and assisted, are wronged and dishonored; and British Columbia joins Manitoba in rebelling against a tyranny which is no longer tolerable. This list leaves most of the troubles and dangers which surround Canada at the present moment unmentioned, but those named are surely enough to justify the question “Whither Are We Drifting?”

NORQUAY, THE LION KING.—The building of the Red River Valley Railway is going on as busily as if the Government and people of Manitoba had never heard of Ottawa in their lives, and didn't know what the word “disallowance” meant. The Dominion Government, evidently conscious of the weakness of their cause, have given up the fight. Norquay finds that the terrible lion, whose roaring was wont to terrify the Prairie Province, is not much of a lion after all if you tackle him in earnest.

NOT SO BRIGHT AS HE ONCE WAS.—John Bright is against commercial union between Canada and the United States, chiefly for the reason that it would, in his opinion, lead to a severance of the union between Canada and Great Britain. Mr. Bright does not produce any stronger arguments in support of this view than he does in support of his contention that Home Rule for Ireland would “sever the union.” In both cases we believe the fine old gentleman is mistaken. Commercial Union would kill the annexation idea, and Home Rule would create a real union in place of the united discord which now exists.

THE REFORM PARTY GIVING ITSELF AWAY.—The fact that Mr. McIntyre of the C. P. R. Syndicate, the standard bearer of “Reform” in the late South Renfrew contest, was defeated by a good solid majority, does not make the case of the party leaders any better; it only proves that the rank and file of the party have clearer ideas of the fitness of things than their managers. Mr. McIntyre is a very worthy gentleman personally, and he would no doubt have been elected on this occasion but for the unfortunate fact that he is a member of the Syndicate. That corporation is feared and distrusted all over the country on account of the influence it already possesses, and the voters of South Renfrew did well in defeating its candidate. But what of the Reform “managers” who selected Mr. McIntyre as their nominee in the face of their record against monopoly in general, and the C. P. R. in particular? Why was it necessary thus to stultify themselves and court the snub they have received? And why should the recognized leaders of the party have given their personal endorsement to the questionable candidature? These questions are too deep for us. It is “management” minus principle—that's all we can say about it. But hereafter M. Laurier will be open to the taunt that he has offered to give himself away to the Syndicate.

**THE GARDEN GATE.**

My love and I stood, side by side, in a nook that's dear to me,  
 While above us towered, and almost touched, a noble poplar tree;  
 It seemed to swing, and bend, and sway, and suddenly kiss its mate,  
 While a snowy cloud caressed the moon—but between us was the gate.

Once more I looked to its silvery height, while the clouds rolled swiftly by,  
 And the grand old tree, in sympathy, delivered a heartfelt sigh,  
 Once more it bent, on embrace intent, and they melted to one; in  
 state,  
 I reached for my love, but found instead—between us the garden gate.

The cloud rolled by, and the man in the moon looked down on the poplar tree,  
 He looked at the gate, and the poplar mate, and then he winked at me;  
 The sky grew clear, and the stars, with a leer, laughingly twinkled—  
 “too late.”  
 And I swore, you bet! next time I'd get, on the other side of the gate.

Listowel, Ont.

O.I.N.