

THE WEEK:

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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.

LIKE most articles which deal with Imperial Federation frankly and with some regard to the practical and practicable, Mr. F. Blake Crofton's letter in another column suggests at more than one point its own answer. THE WEEK has, we venture to hope, already made it pretty clear that it does not "favour the idea of Canada's remaining a dependency for ever, shirking in perpetuity the obligation" of bearing the burden of its own defence. What we should object to, and what we fancy the people of Canada would object to, would be the burdening of this young country with a share in the defence of an Empire to be composed of fractional parts scattered over all quarters of the globe, any one of which parts might at any time be the means of involving the Empire in a war, the expense of which in blood and treasure would be enormous, while the influence of Canada for the prevention of such a war, or in controlling its operations and issues, would be utterly insignificant. If Canada, as an independent nation, became involved in war, it could only be with the consent and approval of its own citizens, who would have to count the cost and face the consequences. Should Mr. Crofton deem it absurd to suppose that an outlying member of the Federation could thus involve the whole Empire in war, we need but point him in reply to the second paragraph of his own letter. If Canada, as a colony, may now at any moment be the means of precipitating a war with the United States, then a fortiori she or any other constituent part of the federated Empire, would have it in her power to do it.

THE strongest argument for Imperial Federation, for Canadians at least, is," says Mr. Crofton, "the present danger of a war with the United States." Imperial Federation is recommended as an insurance policy against this danger. On this point we have two remarks to make. First, one cannot fail to perceive the analogy between this method of insurance and that which is being tried with such sinister results on the continent of Europe. Federation is to so strengthen the resources for war at the com-

mand of Canada that it will compel the United States to preserve the peace and settle the questions in dispute between us. If we were willing to use an argument of the same kind we might say with tenfold greater assurance that to give Imperial Federation the aspect of a menace to the United States would be to make it at once impossible. The history of Maximilian in Mexico, even that so recent and fresh, of Germany in Samoa, is sufficiently instructive on this point. We yield to none in our estimate of British power and prowess, but Great Britain has too many mighty enemies, or, if not exactly enemies, jealous and ambitious military neighbours, in her own continent to adventure rashly upon a great struggle, for a doubtful benefit, in this. In any case the argument founded upon the prospective fears of the people of the United States does not, it seems to us, have its basis in a knowledge of human nature, especially of the Anglo-Saxon nature, as it exists south as well as north of the international boundary line. We question whether the people of the United States, any more than those of Canada or England, are of a kind to be easily frightened into a more friendly attitude.

OUR second remark is that this "strongest argument for Imperial Federation" involves, if we may, with all respect to our correspondent, say so, a self-destructive fallacy. Union increases strength only when it is a real union, that is, when, in such a case as that under consideration, it brings amalgamation and concentration. The picture of "Britain plus Australia, plus New Zealand, plus South Africa, etc.," fighting for Canadian rights might be a reassuring one if it would but bear inspection. But it must not be forgotten that when the federated empire engages in war, the whole empire, and not the fractional part of it that may have found or furnished a *casus belli*, will have to be protected. More than all the resources which Australia, New Zealand and South Africa could respectively furnish would be needed to protect their own coasts and territories. And the same would be, in a large measure, true of Great Britain herself, in face of such a fleet as a nation of sixty or seventy millions, abounding in wealth and energy, could quickly put upon the ocean to threaten her coasts and commerce. This is, too, making no account of that danger of European invasion against which British statesmen even now deem it necessary to prepare. In a word, it is obvious that the actual security of the Empire would not be appreciably increased by federation. Her aggregate strength would still be simply the sum, not the product, of the resources of the constituent parts. There may be no harm in pointing this out, though it is scarcely necessary to do so, since the condition contained in the last paragraph of Mr. Crofton's letter seems to us to settle the whole question. If, we venture to affirm,—not in the spirit of prophesy, but because we believe that causes can and will produce effects—Imperial Federation can be accomplished only on condition of England consenting to place herself in a position in which she may in a few years be out-voted, and so ousted from her place at the head of the empire, then Imperial Federation will not be consummated in the nineteenth century, or the twentieth. Its advocates may as well dismiss their dream, and turn their thoughts to the solution of the more practical problem for Canadian patriots, that of hastening the development of the Dominion into the full-fledged Canadian nationality, which is its noblest goal if not exactly as yet its "manifest destiny."

THE decision of the Dominion Government to reduce the rate of interest in the Post Office and Government Savings Banks to 3½ per cent. on the 1st of October is but a tardy recognition of the pressure of economic law which should govern in matters of this kind. Nothing can be much plainer than that it is contrary to justice and the public interest that the Government, which means of course the tax-payers, of Canada should continue to pay on a large sum of money a rate of interest higher by one per cent. than that current in the banks. Neither on sound business principles nor on the plea of encouraging thrift can such a disregard of the laws which govern trade in money, as well as in all other commodities, be defended. Even if it could be shewn, as it probably cannot, that those profiting by this policy are the in-

dustrious and thrifty poor, whose efforts to improve their condition are worthy of every legitimate encouragement, the fact could not justify such an intermixing of business with charitable considerations, by the custodians of the public purse. On the same ground, it is impossible to accept as valid the reason given for still keeping the rate of interest in the Government Savings Banks one-half per cent. higher than that which is the rule in the ordinary banks. If the Government, by the proposed reduction, saves to the country over \$200,000 a year in the matter of interest, it is hard to see by what right it still continues to pay another \$200,000 from the public funds over and above the amount required by current rates, in the assumed interest of any special class of citizens.

WE have before us the voluminous Report on the Mineral Wealth of British Columbia, prepared by Mr. George M. Dawson, D.S., F.G.S. This Report is published in the course of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada, which is being prosecuted under the direction of Alfred R. C. Selwyn, C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S. Mr. Dawson's elaborate Report teems with information which cannot fail to be of great practical value. It should contribute largely to the development of the vast mineral wealth of the Pacific Province. To further this result, Mr. Dawson has prepared an Annotated List, covering nearly fifty pages, of the localities in which minerals of economic value are to be found. Very suggestive, in connection with this valuable Report, is the recent report of the British Columbia Board of Trade, pointing out the great need, amongst other things, of access to the United States' market, as the only one immediately available, and so the one access to which is an indispensable condition of the development of the great natural resources of the Province. We cannot doubt that the Government which is doing so much and so wisely, by means of scientific exploration and survey, for determining and locating the vast mineral deposits of the Province, will give an attentive ear to the memorial of the Board of Trade, and do all in its power to bring about such modifications of the fiscal arrangements of the two countries as will enable both to avail themselves of the great advantages that should result from the presence of such deposits, in that region.

IN the same connection may be mentioned the brief report on Gypsum Deposits in Northern Manitoba, by J. B. Tyrrell, B.A., F.G.S., who also is connected with the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada. From this brief but interesting pamphlet it appears that there is to the north-west of Lake St. Martin on the Little Saskatchewan River a district which is yet untouched by the axe of the woodman or the plough of the farmer, whose hills contain deposits of gypsum which must be, judging from Mr. Tyrrell's graphic descriptions, practically unlimited in quantity, and of such quality as to render them at some future day of great economic value. The fresh accessions which are constantly being made to our knowledge of the natural resources of the various provinces of the Dominion make it more and more evident that our country contains in many parts vast store-houses of mineral wealth which are as yet unopened, and which demand all the resources of capital, enterprise and statesmanship which the Dominion can command for their development.

DEATH has removed from the political arena in Manitoba the ablest and most influential native leader who has yet appeared. Indeed, the statement would probably be undisputed with the qualifying word "native," omitted. For twenty years, that is, during about the whole life of the Province, John Norquay has been prominent in the public affairs of Manitoba. During considerably more than half of this period he was leader of the Provincial Government. The history of Mr. Norquay, in common with that of several others of the same mixed race, suggests the existence of qualities in that shrewd people, which, with better educational advantages and larger opportunities for development, may yet give its members a prominent place in the history of the North-West. Mr. Norquay was large of stature, and of somewhat striking presence, and was possessed of abilities as a popular leader and orator far above the average. The fact that he was