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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 this journal. Our readers are capable of approving 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 steady expansion of railway mileage throughout Canada has been too marked not to attract the attention of European investors, especially at a time like the present, when one of the periods of speculative activity is in progress. The Dominion has now 12,702 miles of railway in operation, and 540 under construction, representing a capital of \$727,000,000, and so many branch lines are in course of construction that it is certain the figures for the present year will show a marked increase.

The Minister of Justice, carrying with him the sense of the House of Commons, has succeeded in defeating a divorce-bill granted by the Senate, and in so doing, has administered a sharp but wholesome lesson to Canadian young women disposed to emulate the culpable frivolity of Americans. Emily Walker, an Ontario girl, aged 20, and consequently quite conscious of what she was about, repudiated her marriage because she found her husband was not possessed of the income he had represented. There was no criminal charge, and she had left her husband immediately after the ceremony, returned to her home, and remained apart from him. The sympathies of the *paterfamilias* seem to have been enlisted on behalf of a young and pretty woman, and they granted the divorce. The Commons, however, took a sterner view of marital relations, and rightly overthrew what might have passed into an exceedingly lax precedent. Mrs. Walker will have to remain a wife if not a matron.

It is well known that, owing to the increasing difficulty of finding the means of supporting life in Iceland, there has for some years past been a steady and continuous exodus of the population of that far north land of sagas, snow and ice. Our own North-West has benefited considerably in population by the immigration of these Norsemen, whose thrift, hardiness, industry and law-abiding qualities constitute them a highly desirable class of settlers. So extensive has been the emigration that, although the annual excess of births over deaths in Iceland is 640, the population, instead of increasing during the last four years, has fallen from 71,600 to 69,220. This year the exodus will, it is anticipated, be on a larger scale than ever before, and it is expected that 20,000 people, or nearly one-third of the population, will leave the island for fresh fields and pastures new. It may be pretty safely predicted that a considerable portion of this number will establish themselves in the Canadian North-West, whither so many of their countrymen have preceded them.

"When," says a contemporary, "the followers of Robert Owen in England, 60 years ago, declared for 10 hours as a day's work instead of the 12 to 14 then required in shops and factories, the *London Times* declared such a scheme to be 'preposterous, revolutionary and ruinous to British industries.' This glowing prediction was not realized, and at the present time a working day of ten hours or longer is the exception and not the rule among the mechanics in England." The above paragraph is more than emphasized by the almost universal demonstrations of the 1st May. There is no mistaking the signs of the times. An eight hour day of labor, if the workman so wills it, is far nearer of accomplishment to-day than was a ten hour day at the time mentioned.

The Minister of Agriculture has asked Parliament for an appropriation in order that extensive experiments in forestry may be prosecuted in the North-West. Four stations are to be established this year and hundreds of thousands of trees, which have already been found to be sufficiently hardy to survive in that climate, will be planted. These trees will be grown almost wholly from seed, it having been found, contrary to the popular notion, that in the course of say ten years a tree which has been grown from the seed will make more progress than one which has been transplanted. In other words, the transplanted tree will lose more in the process than the difference between the seed plant and the two-year-old tree. The experiment, which, if successfully carried out, will alter the whole face and climatic conditions of the "great lone land," will be watched with the deepest interest, and will probably stimulate a like process to counteract the rapid depletion of the forests in other parts of the Dominion.

Can there be no such thing as independence in political thought, or must the fibre of every brain be hammered out to correspond to that of the purely partizan intellect? Whenever THE CRITIC criticises the policy of the Dominion Government or commends the acts of the Provincial Government, the Liberal press quotes with approval, emphasizing the quotations by asserting that THE CRITIC is a Tory organ, or has Tory proclivities. Now, if THE CRITIC desired to be a party organ, it could readily follow the example of its daily contemporaries and represent things as black or white according to the party role assumed by it, but the fact that it does not do so, and that it gives to its readers a fair and independent view of political questions, is proof positive that it is not a party organ, and hence it is bad taste upon the part of our liberal contemporaries to endeavor to place the party stamp upon our publication, and by implication to attribute an independent opinion to what they are pleased to designate as from a Tory source.

The Short Line delegation from the Board of Trade, Halifax, have had an interview with the Government, but nothing definite in regard to the subsidy to the Grand Trunk and Temiscouata Line was elicited. The DeBertram Syndicate, according to Sir John Thompson, is in the field with an offer to build either of the Short Lines upon being granted a subsidy of \$10,000 per mile. To entertain this offer, or to delay for another session the consideration of a grant towards the building of a Short Line, would be a severe blow to Halifax. If the Grand Trunk constructs the branch line there will be a certainty that with its through connections the supply of freight will test the capacity of the road and greatly increase the business of this city. If an independent syndicate secure the construction, the whole matter is liable to degenerate into a speculation in which the interests of Halifax will have little or no consideration. However, it is well to hope for the best, and to await as patiently as possible the appearance of the supplementary estimates, which may provide for the construction of the Edmunston and Moncton branch without further delay.

An important liquor law decision has been recently rendered by the Supreme Court of the United States, which may possess an even more extended and general interest in view of the persistent attempts at prohibitory legislation of those who believe in compulsory morality. Iowa is a State in which the sale of liquor is prohibited. Illinois brewers sent there soiled kegs of beer, which were offered for sale by the consignee in the original packages. He was prosecuted for illegal sale, and judgment given against him in the Supreme Court of Iowa. That of the United States, however, on appeal, over-ruled the decision, holding that Congress has the exclusive right to regulate inter-state trade, and that the right of transportation implies the right of the consignee to sell unbroken packages. As there is no limit to the size of packages, the thirsty man of Iowa will probably be able to procure in this way any small quantity he may find convenient or desirable. What steps the Prohibition States may take, or what Congress may concede remains to be seen, but at present it would seem that in some matters the several States of the Union are even more liable to check from the Federal power than are our Provinces by the Dominion Parliament.