Truth's Contributors.

What I Saw in Ottawa.

BY COL. D. WYLIE.

Having said so much of "our Lords," what must we say of "our Commons." "Many men, many minds," is a well-known adage. So far as minds are concerned, Sir John may be said to carry the minds of the great majority of the members in his pockets. What he thinks all his followers think. The game of "Follow our Leader," known to the youth of Canada, is too closely followed in matters political. The interests of the country are of less importance than the interests of party. *Exigencies* are more to be considered than honesty. This was boldly asserted by Mr. Thomas White when the truth was known respecting the bargain made with Sir Hugh Allan, and the hundreds of thousands of dollars given to help on the party during the general election. Prior to Sir John's overthrow and the calling in of the McKenzie Government, in my own humble opinion such an episode would have damned for ever any English political leader guilty of the crime.

During our visit to Ottawa there was nothing of particular interest going on except the anti-Scott Act delegation proceedings. Sir John was as cunning as ever in the face of the ever-gathering conviction that the people are fully alive to the destructive effects of the liquor traffic; the wily Premier dared not openly give the delegates much encouragement, at the same time was equally guarded not to bring down upon himself the condemnation of the temperance people, who were eagerly watching his movements. The result—*nil*. As one of the delegates expressed himself, "What had they gained by the toil, trouble and expense of their journey to Ottawa?" Nothing; the very elements were against them. They had made their journey through a terrible snow-storm, and had gained nothing. The delegates all appeared well fed and well clothed. How different would a delegation of the victims of the liquor traffic have appeared! Scantily clad, blear-eyed, bloated and shivering; their money spent that should have clothed and fed themselves and children, and so it will be so long as the liquor traffic exists in the Dominion of Canada, or any other country.

In Parliament, as we have said, there was little of importance going on. "The Lords" had just concluded a week's holiday, and had yet nothing to do. In the Commons, the presence of Mr. Blake and Sir Richard Cartwright gave evidence of the watchfulness of these gentlemen, that nothing should be done without close scrutiny, but with all their watchfulness and criticism, the fact was plain that whenever Sir John took a stand his followers supported him, however unjust or unfair his position might be. In two or three points, however, he had to give way to the suggestions of Mr. Blake. His conduct in some instances exhibited his dislike to Sir Richard Cartwright. He hates the latter named gentleman with a bitter hate. He would not sustain him in his Pacific scandal transaction, and from that day till the present has done all in his power to persecute Sir Richard. It is all in vain, however, and the Government has felt the pain of his stings, and will continue to do so as long as their acts are so tortuous and hurtful to the best interests of the country.

In my former article the importance of the lumbering interests was alluded to. The principal firms at present centred in Ottawa are those of Mr. Booth, (who probably stands first) and Messrs. Perley, Pattie, Bronson and Eddy. Mr. Booth pays to the Federal and Provincial Governments no less than $75,000 per year in taxes. He sends to his lumbering locations no less than 2,000 barrels of flour and 1,500 barrels of pork every season; the others in proportion. In the Ottawa Valley the various firms employ about 10,000 men, principally residents of the city. From this it may be seen how important is the lumbering business not only to Ottawa but to the country generally, and how unjust it is to levy a duty upon articles of food and other articles required in the business of lumbering.

National and Anti-National Phases of Confederation.

BY G. MERCER ADAM.

Two decades have nearly gone by since the country entered upon Confederation, and for a time hushed to a lullaby the strife of jarring interests and the din of faction. There are those, though we are not of the number, who not only doubted the wisdom of our politicans in committing the several provinces to Confederation without a direct appeal to the people, but who, after these years, see no gain from the alliance, or at least counterbalance the gain by a heavy loss. It is too late in the day to reopen the first of these questions; the second is a more practical one for consideration.

What the net results of Confederation are it is not difficult to say. There are, of course, two sides to the balance-sheet; and though exception may be taken to many of the entries on the debit side, and though the patriot heart may sink as it scans not a few of the items, there are off-sets on the credit side which must be taken into equitable account before a true and impartial balance can be arrived at. We do not shut our eyes to the fact that Confederation has not assimilated, nor is likely soon to assimilate, the whole people. A nation is not born in a day: it may be said, indeed, that a thoroughly fused nationality can hardly be looked for on the status of a colony. But has there been no gain, nevertheless? Let those who assert this recall the position of things a score of years ago, or go back a generation, to the elemental state of these British American Provinces before the era of railways. True, Representative Government was an achievement of the times; and in the Union of the Provinces a beginning was made towards effecting that larger union which was to be attained later on. But the picture of the Canadas in the "forties" is the picture of a comparatively primitive community, awaking to the consciousness of the boundless possibilities before it, yet retarded by the rudimentary conditions that surround its existence. Since that era the whole face of the country has undergone change. What, emphatically and universally, was a wilderness, is now in large measure a cultivated garden. Nature has yielded up its tyranny; and civilization is everywhere illuming the dark places with its cheer and light. Politically, the contrast is no less sharp. The old system of irresponsible rule has long since disappeared; and through many a stormy scene and angry tumult the power of the people has triumphed, and has established itself, in the main, in justice and right. The political rule of to-day, we shall of course be reminded, is far from heavenly; and faction, notoriously, has not gone off in a sweet sleep. But though we have not reached the millennium, we have solved many ugly problems, and overcome or averted many calamities that menaced the State.

In trade and commerce the national development also presents gratifying results. The industries of the country are beginning to rival the operations of agriculture, and to furnish increasing means of employment, as well as to become a source of wealth. This much may be said, without questioning the soundness of the fiscal policy of the Dominion, or committing oneself on so delicate a matter as the pros and cons of the "N. P." The acquisition and opening up of our Western domains is another, and an important, feature in the progressive life of the nation, and a signal mark of national advancement. Here again the other side of the picture obtrudes itself; and the advantage of extending the arms of the Dominion over a continent are discounted by the burdens entailed in opening the country for settlement. The obvious answer to this, however, is the one given by both political parties, in drawing upon the country's exchequer for the means to build the Pacific Railway; for, as it has a thousand times been asked, "What is the territory worth if you can't get access to it?"

Nor has the progress of the country been confined to material concerns. Its intellectual life has grown and expanded; and more than a beginning has been made in developing a native literature. Journalism flourishes; and the reading habit is becoming general. Art and education have spread, and are spreading, their refining influences; and, in the cities particularly, some measure of culture has been reached. Intellectually, as well as materially, Canada has made considerable progress; and her social condition, it may safely be said, is not behind that of any other people.

But there is another side to the picture. Undoubted as is the progress of the country, one need not be querulous in wondering why the progress has not been greater. Canada, somehow or other, does not attract immigration; in this respect she is far eclipsed by her southern neighbor. The climate may have something to do in limiting the incoming of settlers; or the emigration system, possibly, may be in default. There is, we know, attraction in numbers, and an equally potent attraction in success. The greater wealth and immense population of the United States, together with the well-known enterprise of her people, must give her some advantage in drawing emigrants to her shores, and in retaining them when she has got them. But, relatively, Canada might expect her share of immigration; which, however, she fails to get. What is there that prevents her obtaining this? Is there anything in the oft-mooted gift of citizenship that explains the matter? We fear there is. Nationality, we know, is more a sentiment than anything else; and in these days of levelling democracy predilections of sentiment are bound to manifest themselves. One thing is clear, that a nation, in all things, has the advantage of a colony. Why Canada remains in theory a colony, while she has all but the status of a nation, is one of those puzzles we must leave the reader to make out. Confederation was a step, but not the ultimate one, in the evolution of the nation. What prevents Canada from taking the ultimate step?

The most manifest evil of the colonial state is the repression of national sentiment; and the lack of it in Canada, with all the indifference that marks its absence, we hold to be one of the anti-national phases of Confederation. There is plenty of British sentiment, and, in a section of the Dominion, perhaps more Gallic sentiment than the country is aware of; but of an ardent and wide-spread Canadian sentiment there is, we fear, little. In its place we have an ever-active sectional feeling, and a tightening of provincial boundary lines, which if over-stepped at all, are over-stepped on the way to the Dominion treasury. Widely extended as are the Provinces of the Dominion, and as yet but sparsely and poorly peopled, it is perhaps to be expected that the connection of the extremities with the heart of the country shall be one that seeks the sources of life. Nourishment for the enfeebled no one would withhold; but let us be sure that the dole of the treasury goes to the enfeebled, and not to the wanton and the prodigal. Self-reliance will come with self-sustenance; and with the latter, doubtless, a vigorous life and a more pronounced nationalism. Self-sustenance, however, may breed self-sufficiency, and this again, if our rulers are not careful, may bring in its train disaffection and finally secession. If Confederation is to be proof against this, it will be by the assiduous inculcation of national sentiment, and by the diffusion of a spirit of patriotism which can only come of fervent nationality and a full-bodied national life.

Among other untoward aspects of the present experiment in government is the attitude we have hinted at above, of certain provinces looking now and again to the Federal treasury for "better terms." If the only real union we are to have is one that gathers round the office of the Minister of Finance and plays snap-dragon from the Federal chest, then Confederation is confessedly a failure, and the end is not far off. The exigencies of party have made this game-playing an expensive sport to the country; and its most sinister aspects are seen in the case of the sister Province of Quebec, where enormous grants have been made to its bankrupt exchequer, on the plea of recouping it for railways built and afterwards sold to the Dominion, the money being wrung from the Federal treasury as the price of the sectional party vote. Aggressive raids of this kind, with the political immorality that brands them, are bound to have a disastrous effect upon Confederation. In the case of Quebec the evil is aggravated by racial jealousy, by religious cleavage, and by sectional hostility and isolation. The unifying process can scarcely go on while these things are permitted; and the consolidation of the Dominion must yet be a long way off. If the recent movement among the national societies of Quebec, in giving encouragement to the colonial schemes of Old France, means anything more than the arrogance and self-assertion of race, then more distant still must be the unification of the Dominion.

To contend against the separating forces in Confederation, we want, as we have said, the infusion of patriotic feeling and the diffusion of national sentiment. Through no influence more potent than literature and the literary spirit can this nationalizing of the Dominion effectively operate. Nothing will better contribute to the welding process, or be more efficient in bringing about homogeneity, and the consolidating influences the country so urgently needs, than a healthy native literature and an ardent national sentiment. With these, and due encouragement given to their exercise, we may see the various Provinces of the Dominion knit more closely together in the bonds of a common nationality, and sectionalism and disruptive influences dispelled as things of alien growth. Some difficult questions, no doubt, will remain to be faced; and not a few tendencies to be checked that look in one quarter or another to separation. But time and destiny are likely to work in our favor, and tact and