

TRUTH.

OLD SERIES—17TH YEAR.

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TRUTH'S MUSINGS.

A parliamentary return was published last week, laid on the table of the House by Sir Hector Langevin, Minister of Public Works. It shows that since 1867, the commencement of the present Confederation regime, there has been expended out of the Dominion Treasury, in aid of public works the large sum of \$143,396,605 and of this sum over one hundred and twenty-one millions and a half has gone towards building, or aiding in the building of railways and canals. This would represent something more than thirty dollars per head for the total population of the country. Added to this the various Provinces have been making large railway grants—in Ontario and Quebec amounting to a number of millions each. If people in Canada are not well supplied with railway facilities it is not for want of liberality in aiding such highways for travel and commerce. There has been about twenty million dollars expended on public buildings, besides the sums paid out by the Provincial governments, and the municipal authorities. If the tax payers have been paying large sums during the past sixteen years it is pretty evident how a large proportion of the money has been expended. Canada would be a very different country from what it is to-day had not such liberal sums of public money been expended on public works.

This year every effort should be put forth to make Toronto as pleasant and inviting to visitors as possible, and no time should be lost in commencing such a commendable work. There are yet numbers of our wealthy and spirited citizens guilty in the matter of keeping up high, tight, and dreary walls between some of the leading streets and their fine grounds within. Such an exclusion of the "vulgar gaze," if that was the object in erecting such fences and walls, was the idea of another generation entirely. What a dreary and monotonous appearance such fences give to the streets against which they are placed? Surely they have outlived their time and ought to be taken down at once. The many fine modern residences we have here, with open grounds not even guarded by a low paling, and the little annoyance such grounds ever have from trespassers, show plainly enough that no one need fear the public in this respect.

The Dominion Parliament made some amendments to the license law of last year before the close of the session, and it is less probable, on that account, than at one time appeared, that there will be confusion and conflict during the coming year. The country was given to understand that persons holding Provincial licenses will not be disturbed and prosecuted by the Dominion officers. Whether those holding Dominion licenses will be prosecuted by Provincial officers remains to be seen. The probabilities are that in

Ontario, at least, the Provincial Inspectors will prosecute those licensed by any authority but their own. In several of the other Provinces, if not in all, there appears to be a very dissatisfied feeling about the unfortunate license business. TRUTH is still of opinion that there was no necessity whatever for such a muddle.

Mr. Gladstone's age and declining strength are giving anxiety to many in England just now. There are many important state matters, greatly affecting the welfare of the nation now in an unsettled state, and the feeling is very general that, should the strength of the great Premier give way under his heavy burdens at this critical time, there is not a man available capable of filling his position.

There is a very similar state of feeling, with many, in regard to the great Premier of Germany also. Bismarck is now in his seventieth year, and he shows many unmistakable signs of disease and declining strength. Where is the man to come from, many ask, to grasp the helm with such an able hand and a firm will?

In Canada, too, men are saying that the Premier who has so long managed to keep his supporters together, and keep his party in power as none other could, is now fast approaching the "allotted span," and he, too, is often indisposed; and who is there to fifty fill his place? Many shrewd men, of all shades of party, are of opinion that our present dominant political party could not long hold together without his skillful leadership. There are not a few of the honest opinion that we have not another public man, anywhere, so capable of controlling the affairs of the country.

Are the able, competent, reliable, men all passing off the stage? Surely there are others as able and as reliable to come. Very likely time will demonstrate clearly enough that the men will be found in the time of need. There never was a time when the facilities were so good for the education and proper training of real statesmen. We are so apt to look with little respect on those of our own time and our own age, with whom we come in every day contact as to under-rate them, and to suppose they are not the equals of those of whom we have had less means of knowing so thoroughly.

Here is a pretty fair specimen of a good deal of the style of editorial writing now adopted by the leading party organs in this city. It is simply disgraceful, and many times more demoralizing than the worst of the "yellow covered literature" at which the same writers turn up their noses so contemptuously. The *Mail*, on Wednesday of last week, printed, in its leading editorial column the following sentences, purporting to describe the

leading characteristics of the Grit party in Canada:

"It has always been evident that 'each man' thinks for himself in the party. The trouble is that they all think differently, and will continue to do so, until their leader manages to rummage out a policy of some sort. 'Let each man work for himself.' Each mother's son of the lot does. 'Counter' is nowhere, and 'each man' keeps a sharp look-out for No. 1. As a natural result, 'each man' helps himself—to everything he can lay his hands on."

The practice of thus characterizing those not in the same party ranks as knaves, and swindlers, and the mere rabble of scallwags ever got together in one company, is not at all confined to one organ, or to one set of party organs. The demoralizing effect of that kind of literature on the young men of the country is such as to bode ill for the future of our political history. Such work is by no means loyal or patriotic, whatever may be the high pretensions of those engaged in it. Of course no really intelligent man believes that the men of any political party are of such a class as here represented. Of course the writer himself did not believe it. The idea that slandering and lying may be considered respectable work so long as it is done in the interests of one party or the other, is demoralizing. As a matter of fact, one party organ is nearly as bad a sinner as the other in this kind of dirty business. As a matter of fact, too, the men composing the rank and file of one political party is just about as honest and just about as patriotic as the men composing the other, whatever may be said to the contrary. The wonder is that the intelligent, well-meaning, reading public tolerate such demoralizing literature so patiently as they do. It is certainly not the best class of reading to allow in one's family.

Manitoba is now dissatisfied with its financial arrangement with the Dominion Government, and is loudly knocking at the door for better terms. There is one thing very sensible about the move now being made by the politicians of the Prairie Province. The Opposition unite with the Government party in a conference regarding some concerted action in the better terms business. Under the circumstances one party will not be afraid to move in the matter for fear the other will be in wait to trip it up just there. Union will be strength in a case of this kind. It now remains to be seen what the Ottawa Premier will do in the matter. The Manitoba demands seem too great, but the whole position and wants of that Province are not so well known here, and they may be more reasonable than they look to outsiders.

One thing is very unfortunate just now, so far as the political peace and harmony of the relations between the Dominion and the Provinces are concerned. The impression is general, whether it is correct or not, that by bullying and blustering Quebec got much better term last session than it could have got had quieter methods been resorted to. The same is the case in

regard to Nova Scotia in '69. Such an impression is sure to give encouragement to others to try similar methods. Manitoba now threatens trouble and dissension unless its demands are fully and liberally met. Time will show whether the same policy will be as successful there. It is most unfortunate that the financial relations between the Dominion and the Provinces appear to be so unsatisfactory all round.

Surely the Provincial Government ought to set the good example to others by removing at once the abominable unsightly old fence surrounding the grounds of the Lieut. Governor's residence. Such a fence ought not to have been built in the first place, and it should not be left standing now. The grounds are among the finest in the city, and they are on our principal streets, where they might be a source of real pleasure to the public. As they are now built in the streets around them have a monotonous and dreary look. TRUTH is sure that our present Lieut. Governor would far sooner see the unsightly fences gone, for the pleasure of the people and the benefit of the city. So long as they stand they set a bad example to other people, and even give some downright mean men an excuse for similar eye-sores elsewhere. What do our Government say about the matter? Let the ground be enclosed by some open, neat, tidy fence, something in accord with the views and customs of the nineteenth century, and then let others, now behind the time, be urged to follow the example. Let it be done at once.

The farmers, or those more specially interested in the dairy interests in New York State have been able to exercise a sufficient influence on the State Legislature to secure the enactment of a law prohibiting the manufacture of oleomargarine, and other forms of "bogus butter" in the Empire State. It is said that the farmers have lost millions of dollars during the past few years by the manufacture and sale of these bogus articles. It is said, too, that the sale of American butter has been much injured in the English markets because of the suspicion that so much of the counterfeit article has been exported. On the other hand, those engaged in oleomargarine manufacture claim that no articles unfit for food, or injurious to the public health have been used by them, and that their product is as clean, as pure, and as wholesome as the butter furnished in the markets.

Mr. George Munro, the successful New York publisher, is a native of Nova Scotia, and in his prosperity he remembers his native Province. He has recently announced his intention of giving a very large sum towards an endowment for Dalhousie College, Nova Scotia. It is one of the oldest and best known colleges in the Dominion, and well deserving of such material assistance as it is just now receiving.