

## THE POLITICAL REVIEW.

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MONTREAL, May 18, 1878.

TO THE HON. H. G. JOLY,  
*Premier, Province of Quebec.*

SIR,

The reasons which have induced me to write you will become clear in the course of this letter. I trust my previous connection with the Railway questions affecting this Province, together with the interest I take in what affects the public welfare, makes any apology for sending it unnecessary.

In ordinary times, when the political machine is moving steadily and with comparative ease, citizens generally are to be excused for taking little interest in what is going on, especially when it is considered how much they must be immersed in their own affairs; but when a great crisis or political change is over the country it becomes the duty of every citizen to enter as intelligently as he can into the prominent questions of the moment, and to act on such convictions as form themselves in his mind from their consideration. Unless the citizens do this there is a great, a very great, danger of the vast public interests at stake passing entirely under the control of unscrupulous politicians who will act only with regard to their own ends and their own pockets. This may be said to be the greatest danger that, in our day, threatens free institutions. And how very great a danger it is may be known from the United States, where the best class of the people have hitherto kept quite aloof from politics, the results being seen in the difficulties they have in finding a public man whose career is not blemished so as to render him unfit to send on a foreign mission; in bankrupt States where the enormous debts have made repudiation either necessary or desirable to the people; in national repudiation which is rising into a policy with them at present; in debt-loaded cities like New York; in bankrupt cities like Chicago; in not a year passing without showing a long list of their highest officials as defaulters for immense sums: these are the results of the best citizens' neglect to interest themselves in the political affairs at periods of change and crisis as well as during ordinary times.