

THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY.

(ARTICLE IV.)

THE third and last topic we proposed to consider was "The Future of our Country." It was remarked by the Hon. D'Arcy McGee, that the first shot fired at Fort Sumter was a warning to Canadians that North America was entering upon a new era of its history. We do not entirely agree with the inferences which Mr. McGee drew from this event; but nothing can be truer than that the present time is pregnant with great events. The neighbouring Republic is rising, phoenix like, from amid the fires of a great revolution—her soil red with the blood of her sors, and wet with her widows' and orphans' tears. In Canada, thank Providence, we have no anarchy—no violence—no bloodshed. But that man is slow to discover the signs of the times, who perceives not that our country is on the eve of great changes—that a peaceful revolution is at our very doors. To use the words of Lord Monck, that "a new nationality" is about to spring into existence.

In choosing our future state of political existence, there are but three courses open to us. We must either continue a colony of Great Britain; join our fortunes to the United States; or become an independent government. A great deal of false delicacy has been manifested by Parliament and the Press in referring to these topics. We find no such "gingerbread" loyalty among the statesmen and writers of the mother country. They have "ventilated" every one of these contingencies as to the future of Canada; and in the remarks we propose to offer, we shall endeavour to speak with the same manliness, fairness and candour. Patriotism is described by a wise man to be "an enlightened self-interest," and it is therefore the highest patriotism for Canadians to consider and choose the best political condition for their future happiness and prosperity.

The writer will yield to none in his veneration for Great Britain, and attachment to many of her noble institutions. During last year he stood amidst her bustling, enterprising cities; he viewed the rich meadows of England, the mountains and lochs of Scotland, and old Erin's green hills, and he felt proud of our nursing mother. And what true-hearted Canadian could feel otherwise? Was it not there that civil and religious liberty had its birth? Have not her warriors covered her flag with glory in every clime; her statesmen been renowned in every age; and her poets, philosophers, divines, and scholars, been the wonder and admiration of the world? And does she not stand to-day, as for centuries past, "Mistress of the Seas," her fleets whitening every ocean, and laden with the riches of commerce—riches more precious than Ophir's gold? Contrasted with Britain, the achievements of ancient Greece and Rome pale; and in these national triumphs we have been permitted to share. We feel proud of our connection with "the sea-girt isle;" and, whatever may be our country's destiny, we shall ever cherish the warmest affection and reverence for the dear old land.

But what contemplative mind has not felt of late that, though our affection for Great Britain remains undiminished, the inexorable march of time is loosening the ties of interest which bind us together? As a colony, the mother country has been of great advantage to us; her support and protection have been given ungrudgingly and unselfishly. But Canada cannot now be called a colony with propriety. Disguise it as we may, when Confederation takes place, a new nation will be born. This fact it is which, conjoined with our internal commercial relations with the United States, is fast causing our paths to diverge—our interests to clash. The defence question well illustrates this point. What has been its history? At the breaking out of the slaveholders' rebellion, Great Britain urged Canada to make preparations for defence. Our Parliament replied by throwing out the costly Militia Bill brought in by the Government of the day. Every few months since—and now as strongly as ever—we have been importuned to erect fortifications, and place our militia on a war footing. Our Government delays and hesitates to comply—and why? Simply because nine-tenths of our people are utterly opposed to the building of fortifications, and regard such an expenditure as a useless, unnecessary and reckless waste of public money. Now, is Great Britain wrong in persistently pressing us to arm? We cannot say she is. From her point of view, her statesmen are acting wisely. The Alabama and other disputes have evidenced that war with the United States is not impossible. They see that Canada is their weak point; that,

situated side by side with the American Republic, and three thousand miles from them, there is danger that the empire may be humbled through this country. They therefore insist that we shall erect costly defensive works. Well, then, is Canada wrong in refusing? Who can say she is, when we see no danger of trouble, except in consequence of some Imperial dispute, and our interests lie not in arming against, but in cultivating the most friendly commercial intercourse with our American neighbours? The truth is, that what is the best policy for Great Britain on this important question, is the worst policy for us. The sooner this is candidly acknowledged and explained to the Home Government, the better it will be for both countries.

The connection subsisting between Canada and Britain has become anomalous and dangerous to both. We are connected with Europe, whilst our interests are essentially those of this continent. The only danger in the world which menaces the mother country, arises from her unprofitable guardianship of British America; and it is no less true, that our greatest danger arises from our connection with her! If war should unhappily arise—which God forbid!—Canada must be the battle-ground, and a single campaign would make it a heap of ruins! British troops and Canadian militia might defend the country so as to retain possession of it, but they could not defend it from war's horrors and desolation. Fortifications or no fortifications—victorious or defeated—the complete destruction of Canada would be certain. Is it to be wondered at, under these circumstances, that some of the foremost politicians of Great Britain are desirous of relieving their country from the danger which its connection with Canada entails, or that many in this country anxiously wish to be relieved from a position so unfortunate as the selected battle ground for the two most powerful nations in the world?

The arguments advanced regarding defence and war apply with equal force to commercial affairs. Every unit added to our population, every dollar to our wealth, increases the divergence between our interests. With far-seeing wisdom and generous liberality, British statesmen have long taught us to expect and prepare for a change in our political relations; and many believe, with Goldwin Smith, Lord Bury, and other writers, that the change would now promote the interests of both countries. Regarding the question there is no necessity for haste or rashness. But we submit to our statesmen whether the time has not arrived, when the welfare of the empire, not less than the safety and prosperity of Canada, demand that we should enter upon a new state of political existence.

RAILWAY POSTAL SERVICE.

THE following is an abstract of the Report of the Commission appointed to determine the rates to be paid to Railways for Postal service.

Mr. Brydges considers that the difficulties encountered by the Grand Trunk Railway Company, in carrying out these undertakings, should influence the rate to be paid for work done by them. The Commission exclude this consideration.

The Railways urge the high prices paid in Great Britain and Ireland, as justifying similar prices here. The Commissioners think that argument entitled to no weight whatever, because these high prices are all for "Post-office trains," of which the Postmaster-General prescribes the hour of departure and the stopping places. Besides, they argue, the greater the traffic, the greater the danger of interference, and the higher the remuneration must be.

The Railways then put forward, as precedents, the rates paid in the States. The Commissioners examine the circumstances of the mail service on several of the U. S. lines, and come to the conclusion, that, as the cases are not analogous to those of our railroads, it would be unwise to follow the example set in any one of them, while it would be unsafe to strike an average.

The Railways next state that the Post-office compartment would hold fifteen passengers, and that the Government should pay for each trip the through fare of that number of persons. The Commissioners are clear that mail bags are not passengers, but freight; and that, moreover, the carriage of the mails does not exclude a single passenger.

Upon the whole, the Commissioners think that the Post-office Department, requiring a space capable of containing three and one-third tons of freight, must pay for that weight at the same rate that the public would have to pay for the like accommodation.

But to what class of freight does mail matter be-

long? The Commissioners say it cannot be regarded as first-class freight, by reason of its peculiar bulk, or weight, or value. Not by reason of bulk, because the Post-office is charged for all the space it requires, and the mail matter must be contained within it. Its weight is ridiculously below the weight paid for. Its value is indeed great, but as it is in charge of the servants of the Post-office, the responsibility of the Company is reduced to a minimum. The Commissioners justify this view, by an examination of the rates paid by Express companies for their space.

The rate is, therefore, fixed by the Commissioners at 5 cents per train mile, for freight train speed.

To allow for passenger train speed, the Commissioners examine the relative cost of running freight and passenger trains, and make what they consider a liberal addition of 60 per cent. for quick trains, and 20 per cent. for slow ones. This makes the allowance, payable on all

ORDINARY ROADS,

8 cents per train mile for quick trains.
6 cents do. do. for mixed do.

In the case of the Grand Trunk road, which carries a much heavier mail than the others, and "without which the present postal service could hardly be conducted," an extra allowance is made; and, for similar reasons, a somewhat higher rate is allowed the Great Western, the sums being:—

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

10 cents per mile for quick trains.
6 cents " " mixed do.

CHAMPLAIN RAILWAY.

10 cents per mile for quick trains.
6 cents " " mixed do.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

9 cents per mile for quick trains.
6 cents " " mixed do.

If the Post-office Department should require more than one-third of a car, the extra space to be paid for in proportion. No extra charge is to be allowed for conveying the officers of the P. O. Department—this being considered an offset against the continuity of the Government business. And in cases where the Department pays for a double service, it is to be entitled to send mail bags, in charge of the Company's servants, by any other train that may be run.

As regards the Grand Trunk, Great Western, and Northern roads, these rates are to commence from September, 1858, when these Companies protested against the payment then fixed.

It will be seen, from the above, that Vice-Chancellor Blake, Judge Day, and Mr. G. W. Wicksteed have at any rate made a clear report, easy to understand. We apprehend it will govern all future relations of the Railways with the Post-office Department.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

James Baillie & Co.
Baukhage, Beak & Co.
Wm. Benjamin & Co.
James P. Clark
John Dougall & Co.
Foulds & Hodgson.
Gilmour, White & Co.
Lewis, Kay & Co.
Thomas May & Co.

McIntyre, Denoon & Co.
Munderloh & Steencken.
Ogilvy & Co.
Bingland, Ewart & Co.
A. Robertson & Co.
Stirling, McCall & Co.
William Stephen & Co.
Thomson, Claxton & Co.
Alexander Walker.

George Winks & Co.

THIS may be considered the first week of Fall season. During the past ten days a considerable portion of the early fall importation has changed hands. The first demands on our trade have been made by buyers from the extreme South and West of Canada, showing that the demand for goods near the frontier must be good. We can hardly consider the stocks as yet complete for this season of the year. Many kinds of goods are scarce, and hard to obtain. During the present week, however, these wants will be supplemented. As far as we can gather, we learn that Grey Domestics, Prints, and all classes of Cotton goods will be scarce this season. It is questionable if there will be any surplus stocks of this class of goods. Woollen goods will be in fair supply, and may be slightly in excess of early requirements. Of Fancy goods there will be plenty. Next week promises to be the heaviest of the season. The large Catalogue Sale,—perhaps the largest ever held in Montreal,—consisting of about 400 packages of assorted goods, will attract a large number of buyers from all parts of the Province. At one time it was supposed the importations for the Fall would be light. The improved tone of things generally, however, has had its effect, we notice, on business on the other side. Some of the shipments, as per late manifests, are large, and there is evidence of pretty large importations. The harvesting of Fall and Spring Grain is now pretty well over, and, as far as can be ascertained, things promise most favourable for the Fall.