

Canadian Illustrated News.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1874.

IS THERE AN ANNEXATION FEELING IN CANADA ?

A fortnight ago we published a long article on Reciprocity and Annexation which attracted considerable attention throughout the press. There was one point, however, on which we insisted with the distinct view of calling out a general and emphatic expression of opinion, but which, to our astonishment, was passed over in utter silence. This was the bold statement of a writer in the *Republic*—a monthly magazine of some pretensions, published at Washington—who declared that a majority and, in some Provinces, nine-tenths of the people are in favour of a peaceable union with the States. If a different sentiment exists at all, it is found merely among officials. The speeches on the Murray resolutions in Nova Scotia, and the Cudlip resolutions in the New Brunswick Legislature, and the debates in the legislatures of all the Provinces outside of the Canadas proper, clearly indicate the public desire for closer relations with the United States. At Ottawa, when the Parliament was convened on the 13th August last, the writer, in conversation with a large number of members affirms that he found a great unanimity of sentiment and even enthusiasm in favour of a union; but the wish was frequently accompanied with an expression of grave doubts as to its probability, on the ground of their present relations with England.

An extra edition of the article in which this audacious statement appeared was sent to nearly every newspaper of the United States and the Dominion, for the express purpose of defeating any scheme of Reciprocity and promoting, instead, a project of speedy Annexation. It might be that, judged on its own merits, the article was beneath notice, but considering whence it came, for what end it was written, and to whom it was addressed, we are decidedly of opinion that it should have been animadverted on by every paper in the Dominion. That this course was not pursued we regard as a capital mistake. For either the very grave statements of the Washington magazine are true or they are not true. If they are not true, it is well that the Americans should know it and thus be spared a needless misapprehension. If they are true, it is time the Mother Country should know it and thus be freed from the farce of mock manifestations of loyalty. It will not do for Canadian papers to maintain an indifferent silence when almost the totality of their representatives at Ottawa are openly charged with favouring a transfer of their allegiance from Great Britain to the United States.

For ourselves, we deem it a duty to speak out and say all we know of the matter. We shall deal only with fact, leaving sentiment out of sight altogether, for the reason that we have no theoretical scruples in the premises. We are not of those who regard British connection as a *quæ qua non* of our national existence; we have no objection to Independence except as to the mere detail of its possible prematurity, and if we saw the feeling of the country leaning towards Annexation, led by that unerring instinct which conducts a free, intelligent people toward its own amelioration, we are far, very far from having that foolish aversion to American institutions which would induce us to believe that, in adopting them, the Dominion of Canada would be making a bad bargain. On the contrary, we should be among the first to encourage our people to follow their destiny, spite of taunts of treason and the outcries of effete Toryism. But, as a matter of fact, is there any Annexation feeling in Canada? There is, unquestionably. Is it general? It exists in every Province. Is it preponderating? No. Is it outspoken? No. Is it active? No. Does it command a majority in any one Province? We believe not. In Ontario, which is the Empire Province of the Dominion and which naturally takes the lead in all public questions, the population may be said to be divided into three parties—the Liberal, the Conservative, and the National. The Liberal record is clear and unequivocal on this point. There are no truer friends of Confederation, no stauncher supporters of British connection than Messrs. Mackenzie, Blake and Brown. We mention the latter because we must believe the utterances of his paper, although we are aware that he has always been accused by his enemies of secretly favouring Annexation. The Conservative party in Ontario is also above suspicion and its great leader has proved by acts, more than by words, how much he loves the land whose destinies he may be said to have shaped, and how

fondly he clings to the traditions of the Empire. As to the National party, besides the distinct declaration of its programme, we have the statement of Mr. Moss, one of its exponents in Parliament, squarely antagonistic to Annexation. In Quebec, the Conservatives are strict Confederationists, but the Liberals are divided. The French fraction of these are in favour of Annexation, and although they are quiescent at present, their real feelings on the subject are a secret for nobody. Among the English-speaking Liberals, a certain number are also known to tend in the same direction. Nova Scotia is the Province where Annexation has met with most sympathy. There are traditional and geographical reasons for this, outside of any discontent arising from political complications. We have been assured by native Nova Scotians that it would require no revolution to put that Province among the galaxy of States. As to New Brunswick, we have less information, but judging from its press, we should say that the Annexation feeling is very partial there indeed, and quite dormant. We should put British Columbia nearly on a level with Nova Scotia. Its geographical isolation from the rest of the Empire for many years, has unconsciously drawn it towards the United States, and if its terms of Union with Canada are not carried out entirely and promptly by the building of the Pacific Railway, we should not be surprised to find it disposed to drift away from the Dominion.

From this general survey of the Provinces, it appears clear that the statement of the writer in the *Republic* must be strongly qualified. There is indeed an annexation feeling in Canada, but it is far from being such as represented by him. There is one feature about this feeling, however, which even he has overlooked. Under certain circumstances it could be made to grow, to widen, to predominate and become irresistible. The people of Canada are sincerely devoted to the Mother Country. They love the old traditions and take pride in the old history, but they are thoroughly practical withal, and rightly deem that their own interest must take precedence of mere sentiment. Since the establishment of Confederation a national feeling has been engendered among them, and they now understand that their first loyalty is to Canada. If they think that Canada will be benefited by remaining a colony, they will advocate the continuance of British connection. If they believe that Independence will suit them better, nothing will deter them from adopting it. Persuade them that their advantage lies in Annexation to the United States, and what feeling there is in the country on that score will soon ripen and bear fruit. Meantime, they let things take their course, producing their natural inevitable results. Meantime, too, let theorists and factionists hold aloof. Their interference would only do harm. And whether they regret the present condition of Canadian feeling or not, let them not misrepresent it in the public prints and thus induce hopes on the part of others which for years to come are doomed to disappointment.

THE PRESIDENT ON SPECIE PAYMENTS.

PRESIDENT GRANT has at length come forward with a plain statement of his views on the vexed question of finance. He joins issue with the inflationists and declares unequivocally in favour of a return to specie payments. His views are well worth consideration, especially as they will be made a test issue between the parties at the next elections. He believes it a high and plain duty to return to a specie basis at the earliest practicable day, not only in compliance with legislative and party pledges, but as a step indispensable to lasting national prosperity. He thinks, further, that the time has come when this can be done, or, at least, to begin with less embarrassment to every branch of industry than at any future time after resort has been had to unstable and temporary expedients to stimulate unreal prosperity and speculation on a basis other than coin as the recognized medium of exchange throughout the commercial world. The particular mode selected to bring about a restoration of the specie standard is not of so much consequence as that some adequate plan be devised and the time fixed when currency shall be exchangeable for specie at par, and the plan strictly adhered to. The general features of his plan are these: First, he would like to see the legal tender clause, so called, repealed, the repeal to take effect at a future time, say July 1st, 1875. This would cause all contracts made after that date for wages, sales, &c., to be estimated in coin. The specie dollar would be the only dollar known as the measure of equivalents when debts afterwards contracted were paid in currency. Instead of calling the paper dollar a dollar, and quoting gold at so much premium, we should think and speak of paper as at so much discount. This alone would aid greatly in bringing the two currencies near together at par. Secondly, he would like to see

a provision that at a fixed day—say July 1, 1876—the currency issued by the United States should be redeemed in coin, on presentation to any Assistant Treasurer, and that all the currency so redeemed should be cancelled and never re-issued. To effect this it would be necessary to authorize the issue of bonds, payable in gold, bearing such interest as would command par in gold to be put out by the Treasury, but only in such sums as should from time to time be needed for the purpose of redemption. Such legislation would insure a return to sound financial principles in two years, and would work less hardships to the debtors' interests than is likely to come from putting off the day of final reckoning. It must be borne in mind, too, that the creditors' interest had its day of disadvantage also, when the present financial system was brought on by the supreme needs of the nation at the time. He would further provide that from and after the day fixed for redemption no bills, whether of national bonds or of the United States, returned to the Treasury to be exchanged for new bills, should be replaced by bills of less denomination than ten dollars, and that in one year after resumption all bills of less than five dollars should be withdrawn from circulation, and that in two years all bills of less than ten dollars should be withdrawn. The advantage of this would be strength given to the country against times of depression, resulting from war, failure of crops, or any other cause. By keeping always in the hands of the people a large supply of the precious metals, with all smaller transactions conducted in coin, many millions of it would be kept in constant use, and of course prevented from leaving the country. Undoubtedly a poorer currency will always drive the better out of circulation. With paper a legal tender and at a discount, gold and silver becomes articles of merchandise as much as wheat or cotton. The surplus will find the best market it can. With small bills in circulation there is no use for coin, except to keep it in vaults of banks to redeem circulation. During periods of great speculation and apparent prosperity there is little demand for coin, and it will flow out to a market where it can be made to earn something, which it cannot while lying idle. Gold, like anything else, when not needed becomes a surplus, and like every other surplus it seeks a market where it can find one by giving active employment. Coin, however, can be secured. The panics and depressions which have occurred periodically in times of nominal specie payments, if they cannot be wholly prevented, can at least be greatly mitigated. Indeed, it is questionable whether it would have been found necessary to depart from the standard of specie in the trying days which gave birth to the first Legal Tender Act had the country taken the ground of no small bills as early as 1856. Again, the President would provide an excess of revenue over current expenditure. He would do this by rigid economy and by taxation where taxation can best be borne. Increased revenue would work a constant reduction of debt and interest, and would provide coin to meet the demand on the treasury, for the redemption of it, not thereby diminishing the amount of bonds needed for that purpose. All taxes that begins after redemption should be paid in coin or in notes. This would force redemption on national banks. With a measure or measures like these, which would work out such results, General Grant sees no danger in authorizing free banking without limit.

We have already referred to the magnificent demonstration which the French-Canadians of this Province and of the United States intend making on the 24th instant, the feast of St. Jean-Baptiste, their patron. The utmost enthusiasm is prevailing in regard to this celebration, and from present appearances there seems no doubt that we shall have the pleasure of recording a brilliant success. No less than 2,500 delegates, representing fifty or more national societies, will be present on the occasion from the United States alone. It is proposed to lodge these at the Crystal Palace and to extend to them all the hospitalities of the city. The festival will last two days. On the 24th religious services will be performed, and a monster convention held. On the 25th there will be a picnic and open air concert on St. Helen's Island.

That the object of this gathering is to be a practical one is evidenced from the following series of questions addressed to the presidents, officers and members of the Canadian Societies in the United States and the Dominion, and which will be discussed at the Convention on the 24th and 25th inst.

- I. What is the total of the French-Canadian population in the place where you reside?
- II. What are the diverse occupations of that population?
- III. Give the number of persons engaged in the different professions, trades, etc.
- IV. Give the number and character of the manufactures