

in its favour, there would soon be proof how widespread is the conviction of its truth. There is still a feeble survival of the hereditary dislike of American institutions. There is still a residuum of devotion which would urge, in favour of our political connection with England, the maudlin analogy of family ties. A colonial feeling still taints the air of healthful and inevitable change, and if it were proved beyond cavil that a dependent state will always have a provincial mind, apologists for the filial regard of English interests would be found. Yet loyalty is not creditable to any man or nation without regard to the conditions which make it honourable; and loyalty to the British name and traditions is quite consistent with a severance of our political connection. The former inheres in the race, and will not depart while the glorious memories of the race shall last; but the latter will be determined by our interests, and not by our loyalty.

The opposition to annexation hitherto has been founded chiefly on unreasoning sentiments. Henceforth it must stand or fall by the test of harmony with Canadian interests, and in the solution it may afford of difficulties which neither of the Canadian parties has attempted to cope with. It is reasonable to believe, for example, that in case of annexation, the race feeling of Quebec would be comparatively harmless, because its influence on the federal affairs of so vast a nation would be small; and if the impolitic concessions made in the earlier history of the province have given an indefeasible foothold to unprogressive ideas, surely their influence would nullify itself if restricted to a small sphere. Local questions and prejudices might work out their own salvation in the new state of Quebec without any disturbance of its neighbours. The other provinces of the Dominion would then be in commercial union with the United States, and participate in the inter-state freedom of trade which has built up the industrial greatness of the Republic.

If it be said that the annexation movement is not a stirring one, it may be replied that, although party exigencies have not combined to make it so, yet these latter are too often mere surface indications which fail to reveal the force of opinion in its deeper currents. Are we to infer that the reasons which, thirty-eight years ago, led prominent Canadian statesmen to sign the Annexation Manifesto, have not since then become the property of a large constituency of thinking men? Certain it is that among our merchants there is a strong annexation feeling, and that most of those who hail the prospect of a national party, do so with the belief that annexation is our goal. It is no less certain that some of the most prominent writers on the Liberal press, and an increasing number on the Conservative press, would declare in favour of a change which the tactics of party exclude at present from its programme. It is for this reason—the loosening of the old party bonds—that the approaching elections may prove momentous in their issues. If, after the turmoil is over, no new question of importance should arise, it will be an additional proof that Canadian partyism has survived its usefulness, and that the discussion of great living issues which, in the wide historic sense, are the reason of its being, has become less important than the forms under which its warfare is carried on.

There are evidences, it is true, which suggest an impartial readiness of the public mind for the consideration of the question of annexation. The recent Nova Scotian vote sweeps away the objection that it is premature, and there can be little doubt that the Repealers have their political counterparts in the other pro-

vinces. The question is now within the range of our practical politics, and on this issue the political contests of the future will be fought.

J. W. R.

### THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(From the Desk of a *Hansard* Reporter.)

A *Hansard* reporter's strictly professional opinion of a Parliamentary speaker is likely to differ very considerably from that of any ordinary listener equally sound in judgment and equally free from prejudice. Hamlet's advice to the players, to "suit the action to the word and the word to the action," howsoever valuable it may be to the orator who acts upon it, or however pleasing it may be to his audience, is of no account so far as the reporter is concerned. The manner and form of the speaker's verbal expression are all that come within the sphere of his art; and his favourite orator is the man who speaks more or less deliberately, enunciates clearly, and, above all things, constructs his sentences lucidly, and with some view to their appearance in long primer and minion in the columns of the next day's *Hansard*. Such a speaker may be no orator as Brutus was, or as Mr. Blake or Mr. Chapleau is. He may even rattle along at times with the speed of a limited express on a down grade. But if—to use a reporter's phrase—he "clears up his sentences" as he goes, and speaks so that he may be distinctly heard, he may safely count upon being a favourite in the *Hansard* room. Mere rapidity of utterance is not of itself the "terror" to the reporter that it is commonly supposed to be. The true reason why the reporter has usually a wholesome dread of the rapid speaker is that he knows by experience that extreme rapidity of utterance is almost invariably associated with every other quality that makes a speaker hard to report verbatim. A very rapid delivery generally means a very indistinct delivery. It frequently means such a mixing and muddling of the English language that—as actually happened in the case of a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature, who unjustly censured the official reporters for their treatment of his speeches—a strictly verbatim report would expose the speaker to the ridicule of his fellow members and the public. The reporter's real difficulty is not so much in "taking" the actual words of such a speaker, although, owing to the fact that he generally clips his consonants into the merest fragments and skips his vowels altogether, that is oftentimes a sufficiently troublesome task. The reporter's worst difficulties begin when he attempts to transcribe his notes into "copy," for it is almost needless to say that a strictly verbatim report of such a speech is out of the question. He must of course adhere to the speaker's language as closely as possible; but it also falls to his duty to evolve something like rhetorical and grammatical order out of chaos. Subjects and predicates which the speaker has left in a state of overt hostility must be coaxed into agreement; verbal "gaps" must be "stopped"; subordinate clauses which have usurped the functions of their superiors must be relegated to their proper stations; mere verbal repetitions and redundancies must be eliminated, and—hardest task of all—the reporter must in some cases take a recalcitrant sentence by the neck, so to speak, drag it out of the rhetorical *cul de sac* in which the speaker has left it, and set it on its grammatical legs again. These and the like offices Canadian reporters, following the universal custom in other countries, have constantly to perform for Canadian orators. But verily they have their reward! Such a speaker as I have described never fails to assure