

THE REPEAL MOVEMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—There seems to be some misapprehension in the Upper Provinces in regard to the extent and meaning of the recent action of the Legislature and people of Nova Scotia, in seeking a separation from the Canadian Confederation. Some newspapers profess to pooh-pooh the movement. Others ascribe it to a desire to levy blackmail upon the Federal Government in the shape of Better Terms. Some are good enough to refer to Nova Scotia as a selfish province, always seeking to obtain money from the Dominion, and suggest that she had better be allowed to go. Others, in a better spirit, speak with sorrow of this attempt to break up the Confederation and trust that good government will have the effect of appeasing the manifest discontent which prevails in Nova Scotia.

Perhaps, in place of these vague speculations, it would be well, once in a while, for candid thinkers to consider the causes of this discontent in a broad spirit, and see if they are not worthy of fair and rational discussion.

First of all, it would be wise for the people of Ontario to get rid of the idea that Nova Scotians have no larger ideas in politics than mere grants from the Dominion treasury. The records of this province show that in the past she has produced able men, who have fought out the battle of Responsible Government in a better spirit, and with more satisfactory results, than the colonial statesmen of either Upper or Lower Canada. The system of Constitutional Government was achieved in Nova Scotia without rebellion or bloodshed. It was accomplished in a perfectly peaceable and constitutional manner of legitimate agitation. Nova Scotia can fairly lay claim to having produced the author of Responsible Government, not for this province only, but for the Colonial Empire—Joseph Howe. The views of the people and public men of Nova Scotia are as broad as those of Ontario, and it is safe to assume that any movement in the direction of breaking up this Confederation is inspired by reasons as sound, and by motives as elevated, as any possessed by those who are striving to build up a great nationality in this northern half of the Continent of North America.

The first question which every man in Canada has a right to consider is, Whether the elements of a successful and consolidated nationality exist in this Confederation? A great deal of doubt has already been thrown upon this proposition by writers in the Upper Provinces. Some have regarded the existence of a great French Province between Ontario and the Maritime Provinces as a formidable, if not fatal, barrier to the success of the Confederation. Able statesmen in Canada have frequently affirmed that the interference with provincial rights on the part of the Federal authorities would have a damaging effect upon our unity, and tend to break up the whole structure. Mr. Goldwin Smith, in the columns of THE WEEK and elsewhere, has reiterated the opinion that there was no real cohesion between the disjointed string of provinces extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Indeed, from the beginning, there have been constant misgivings as to the stability of the Confederation, and there must be some cause for all this. In order that a great nation should be evolved from this union of the Provinces of B. N. America, there should be no doubt, no misgivings, for these are fatal elements.

The people of Nova Scotia entered the Confederation reluctantly, because they foresaw that there could be no real union between this province and the Canadas. Those who were induced to favour the union were misled, as many of them have since discovered. In 1866, when the Confederation question was the burning one in Nova Scotia, the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States came to an end. The people were told that Canada would supply the place which the United States had formerly afforded in the way of markets. It needed but a glance at the map of the country to demonstrate the fallacy of this, and the majority of the people of Nova Scotia never believed it. Neither did the people of New Brunswick. But, at the same time, came the Fenian raids, and alarmists dwelt upon the necessity of union for common protection. Governors were sent out to declare to a loyal people that it was Britain's policy to have their provinces united. These were the means used to lure the people of New Brunswick and the Legislature of Nova Scotia into accepting the Confederation scheme. The construction of the Intercolonial Railway was a further bait.

We have had nineteen years' experience of the system, and let any candid man say, if he can, that the results have been satisfactory. Have the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec afforded markets for the products of these Maritime Provinces? Have they, in any sense, supplied the place of the United States in the way of trade? Are the bonds of interest and sympathy growing each year closer? These are questions which public men and political writers must look into, for they form the gist of the whole matter. Let it not be imagined that the leaders of the Repeal movement in Nova Scotia are so narrow-minded as not to recognize the fact that if the conditions were favourable, the union of the several provinces of B. N. America into one grand consolidated nationality would be preferable to isolation. This may be assumed. No one fails to recognize that it is a serious thing to talk of breaking up the Confederation. But the vital point is, How much sacrifice are these provinces called upon to make in the attempt to build up what is believed to be an artificial and essentially unstable union? It will be admitted that the foundation of success is confidence in the system. The majority of the people of Nova Scotia have no confidence in the ultimate results or destiny of the Confederation. They know that it has been, and is, injurious to them, and they have no faith that it will ever be otherwise.

In the presence of this issue, it is idle to talk about Better Terms, or enter into a calculation as to the amount of money which the central

Government has expended in the different provinces. Granted that Ontario has contributed proportionally the most, and received proportionally the least. This signifies nothing. It only proves that Ontario is not benefiting by the Confederation, and, if no portion is gaining anything by it, why attempt to work out a fruitless, a purposeless, and impossible game?

The fact is that during these nineteen years of Confederation, with all the influences of a Government bound to force an inter-provincial trade, there has not grown up a healthy trade between the Upper and Maritime Provinces. Nova Scotians have been compelled by malignant tariffs to buy flour from Ontario and goods from Montreal and other Upper Province cities, but it has not been to their interest to buy them. It is palpably the interest of Nova Scotia to buy her flour from the United States, for the simple reason that she could pay for it with her own products, whereas we have nothing to send to Ontario or Quebec in return. Nova Scotia pays for pretty much everything she buys from the Upper Provinces in hard cash, and this money is obtained very largely from a hampered trade with the New England States. Of the thousands of vessels which leave the various ports of Nova Scotia, not one ever turns its prow in the direction of the Upper Provinces, while a great majority of them do go to the United States. This is manifest to the dullest observer. How long can such a system be tolerated—how can it be expected to produce satisfactory results?

Although Confederation has given the Upper Provinces, to a certain extent, the command of the markets of Nova Scotia, it will not be contended that, therefore, the Upper Provinces are gaining any great advantages thereby. The natural trade of Ontario is not with the Maritime Provinces. It is with the great States of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan, just as the natural trade relations of the Maritime Provinces are with the New England States. The attempt to force a trade in artificial channels is a war against geography, a defiance of the laws of nature. It must continue to bear bitter fruits in spite of all the patriotic gush that self-styled patriots may indulge in. The question is, Is the game worth the candle? Ontario is paying hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in the shape of a coal tax. She is paying this as a fine for buying her coal where God and nature intended she should buy it—from Pennsylvania. And all this enormous taxation is not even mitigated by the thought that it is doing anybody any good. It is safe to say that Ontario's coal tax does not benefit the Nova Scotia coal industry to any appreciable extent.

These are among the reasons which have tended to destroy confidence in the Confederation among the people of Nova Scotia, and a majority of them have declared that they are tired of it and are willing to take the responsibility of breaking it up. Perhaps they are wrong. If so, the proper thing is for some of the believers in this Confederation to establish the fact and make their error manifest. I should personally be glad if any one could convince me that all was going well; that the elements of strength, stability, and consolidation existed in this Canadian Confederation. There are no charms to me in isolation. But the question must be looked straight in the face and argued on this line. The true meaning of the Nova Scotia Repeal movement is lack of faith in the Confederation. Is this absence of faith confined entirely to the Province of Nova Scotia?

Halifax, August 2nd, 1886.

J. W. LONGLEY.

FLOWERS.

FLOWERS bloomed in Eden; there the fragrance of their breath  
Was breathed in air untainted by the withering touch of death:  
That withering, blighting touch has never ceased to fling  
Its baneful influence over every living thing;—  
And flowers too must die,—yet no! the perfume of a flower  
Is too ethereal for the touch of that relentless power.  
The sweetest blossoms droop and fade, but perfume will remain,  
We know not where it passes to, we know not whence it came.  
Science tells us sunbeams give the rose its lovely hue,  
They paint the gaudy tulip and the sweeter primrose too—  
Ah yes! but colour ranks not as the highest floral boon,  
Colour is everywhere, not so the rich perfume.  
There are mysteries in flowers which science can't reveal,  
Not to the senses only do their many charms appeal;  
Wells of deep thought spring up, high aspirations rise,  
Until our gaze is wafted upward to the skies,  
And we worship and adore the wondrous loving Power  
That has centred so much true enjoyment in a flower.

Ottawa.

M. F. F.

SEVERAL stories are related respecting the eccentricities of the father of the present Duke of Cambridge, who would give vent aloud to the thoughts current in his mind during divine service. Once when the clergyman said, "Let us pray," the Duke added audibly, "With all my heart." On another occasion, as we have heard, he said, "Why the devil shouldn't we?" Once, as the unfortunate curate was reading the story of Zaccheus, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor," the Duke astonished the congregation by saying aloud, "No, No! I can't do that; that's too much for any man—no objection to a tenth." In answer to "Thou shalt not steal," the Duke remarked: "No; I never did steal anything except some apples when I was quite a little boy." The Duke at another time objected to the prayer for rain on account of the wind, "No use praying for rain in a north-east wind."