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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE *Globe* has been setting before us a black list of members of the majority at Ottawa with the special ties of interest, or expectations, which bind each of them personally to the Government. Without pretending to vouch for the accuracy of details, we can well believe that the picture is substantially correct. No doubt we are governed largely by influences more or less corrupt: it is well that we should know it, and that the proofs should be distinctly brought before us. The *Globe* might reckon, if it pleased, as part of the bribery fund all the places in one branch of the National Legislature. The mistake is in supposing that the description applies only to the party which happens now to be in power at Ottawa. Ontario, which is in the hands of the other party, is governed by the same method as the Dominion. Seldom perhaps has patronage of every kind down to the very humblest local office been more systematically used for the purchase of political support than it now is in this Province. No department of the public service, not even Education, escapes; and a Grit, we are assured, to be made a justice of the peace needs only education enough to enable him to write his name. The compact with the Archbishop is surely at least as unclean and as demoralizing as any influence exercised over politicians on the other side. Nor is the effect of the system in narrowing and degrading the representation more conspicuous on one side than on the other. On both sides those are excluded who refuse to prefer faction to the public interest, and no man prefers faction to the public interest from motives of the highest kind. The Bribery Investigation has incidentally shown us to what sort of candidates wire-pullers in quest of repeated moral must be repeated once more. On no particular party or leader, but on the party system, rests the blame. When those great ques-

tions of public principle which justify party divisions are exhausted, as exhausted in time they must be, what is there to hold a party together but personal interest, which will always be more or less corrupt? And what is there to prevent corruption from deepening and spreading till the cancer reaches the life of the Commonwealth? These are the momentous questions which we have so often desired to see fairly faced and thoroughly discussed by those who wring their hands over Black Lists, and at the same time uphold the party system.

SIR LEONARD TILLEY'S promise of ten years full tide of prosperity is not likely to be realized. Ominous reports come from Ottawa that the Minister of Finance is short of cash and is borrowing from the Bank of Montreal. The surplus seems to have disappeared, and in its place a deficit begins to yawn. There is evidence in the confession of the *Montreal Herald* and the general tone of the press that the condition of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was correctly stated when it was said to be in want of funds to finish the road. Sir John Macdonald, in parrying troublesome questions, does not get rid of the impression that the Company has applied to the Government, whether in writing or not, for aid; and the statement that there is no intention to bring down a measure of relief this session can only mean that, up to date, no decision had been taken. Sir John may be convinced that some form of aid is necessary; he may even be willing to grant it, but he is alarmed at the spectre of the black-mailer who is waiting an opportunity to pounce down upon him the moment he advances to the relief of the national railway. Quebec demands more millions, this time on account of the North Shore Railway, which has been sold, and in respect to which the Province should no longer have anything to ask. Nova Scotia demands an increase of subsidy, and Ontario gives warning that she cannot consent to suffer from any further disturbance of the financial basis of Confederation—that for any special privileges granted to other Provinces she must get an equivalent. The location of the shortest line, governed by two conditions which decree that it shall not be the shortest, from Montreal to the Atlantic, gives rise to all sorts of local demands. St. John and Halifax must be taken on the way; that is a condition precedent, and is inconsistent with the general purpose of finding the shortest line. Quebec insists on being made the summer port of the Canadian Pacific; but in this demand she gets no support from Montreal. She wants the St. Lawrence River bridged by something better than the traditional ice-bridge, the value of which in the mind of the average citizen has become doubtful; for the realization of this wish she is half willing to wait, seeing she is not in a condition to enforce her demand. If the Pacific Railway is to be finished in the time promised there can be no doubt that some measure of relief will have to come. And then will come, also, a host of demands on the Government, compliance with which will virtually be made a condition of voting for the relief bill. Sir John hesitates to make the plunge, which he knows must be made, for fear that the sharks finding him at a disadvantage will seize the opportunity to work their will upon him.

"If Canada should be called upon by the British Government to furnish troops for the Imperial service, the British Government would, of course, foot the bill. So, too, if the offer of help that has been made by a number of Canadian officers, acting on their individual responsibility, should be accepted, the British Government will pay the shot." Thus speaks our highest authority, being no doubt well-advised. So much for the pledge given the other day to the gaping English by a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath that Canada would be ready to share the responsibility and the cost of British wars. Great Britain is at liberty to recruit in Canada, as the Americans did on the largest scale in the time of the Civil War, provided she will give commissions to Canadians, which the Americans did not. That is the net amount of the assistance really offered her. It is not worth much, because Canadians, though fully as brave and as intelligent as Englishmen, are, from their more democratic habits, less amenable to military discipline, and as the nominal wages of labour here are higher, will be less attracted by the British rate of pay. Australian loyalty takes a different line; it foots the bill and pays the shot. Perhaps Canada may