

A village or township council consists of a reeve and four councillors, with additions in certain cases. This vast system is worked out with the greatest simplicity and ease. It is elastic and facile in its movement. Provision is made for the occupation of new territory, the addition of fresh municipalities, and the gradual absorption into the municipal system of the country. One looks at this piece of legal art from amidst the rough and intractable arrangements of England, with an envy at its superiority, which is scarcely tinged with a hope of ever being able to rival it. What is the reason of the difference in the treatment of such questions there and here? They are impelled by the general necessities of progress; we are obstructed by long-crystallized privileges and deeply-rooted institutions. There is bigotry in Canada, a bigotry of many sects and of many phases of thought, and it does complicate, nay sometimes obstruct, legislation; but it has not that immovable spirit, that conservative stupidity, which neither admits the inevitable nor looks for solutions. What is the reason of this? First, I think it is the fact that the whole body social and politic is in motion—nothing can stop its progress. Even Quebec, with ancient traditions and an old organization, is compelled to move on. The spirit of progress rushes into it, and every man feels the impulse. The whole Dominion is instinct with life and the growth of life. I am no materialist, but I do believe in the awakening influences of material prosperity. Secondly, there is its distribution. In proportion as that prosperity is fairly distributed throughout a community will the community wake up and live. Restrict it to a few, surround it with privilege, vest it in fractions of society, not it round with complicated exclusive laws and customs, leave the great balance of society outside its benefits, and your material prosperity will only intensify the disintegrating influences just as it exaggerates the disproportion. In Great Britain we boast of our material prosperity, but we look with terror on its concomitant conditions. Economists may swear that it reaches and blesses the whole community, but a stroll in the slums of a city, or along the byways of a country district, gives the lie to the statement. If you want to know what material prosperity means in a life-giving sense to the whole community, you must go to American and Colonial States, and see how generally distributed wealth improves the conditions of social harmony and human co-operation. Then will you best understand how great philanthropists, as well as eminent statesmen, have been those men who have striven by political reforms in Great Britain to equalise, and to improve in equalising, the political status of the people, or by economic legislation to distribute more equably the blessings of material prosperity.

I think I have now incidentally answered most of the questions that would naturally have occurred to the majority of my audience, unless perhaps on one or two points of political importance, with regard, however, to which it might not be in place for me, considering my official relations, to express an opinion. But on the face of such facts as I have adduced, disquisitions on Government and politics seem to dwindle in importance. As I have said, progress and material prosperity loom up first into view, and from these Government and politics take much of their shape and direction. I have presumed to night that you did not desire from me a constitutional dissertation. The form of the Government of the

Dominion was written upon our status book in the Act of 1867, and appears to be more intelligently understood by Englishmen than are the circumstances of the country which was thereby legislated upon. What you desire to know is how the Governmental machine works, and my answer is that the results appear in the marvellous development of the Dominion since the confederation in 1867. You are probably aware that the confederation of the British provinces was hastened by the alarming and significant hints from time to time thrown out by British statesmen. It was supposed to be, and in effect it actually was, the theory of the school of politicians which took its name from Manchester, that colonies were but a burden and useless expense to Great Britain; and Mr. Goldwin Smith was then a prominent advocate of views which possibly at this moment he would not be prepared to propound. Mr. Roebuck, who had at one time represented the colony in this country with, his characteristic wrongheadedness, was amongst the most noteworthy of those who expressed the view that the sooner Canada was separated from Great Britain the better for her and for us. Opinion has grown. Facts have fought for the Imperialist dogma. I cannot conceive that to night there will be many in the Reform Club who will be prepared, after what they have heard, to get up and endorse that opinion. An additional incentive to confederation was no doubt the anomaly of the position of the North American Provinces. Responsible government had been conceded to each of them; they had popular representatives; taxation by representative bodies; their officials were appointed by local governments, and only the Governor was nominated by the Crown. Like the Province of Australia, they were isolated, their tariffs were different, each province was foreign to the other. The custom houses on the frontiers interposed between States under the same Imperial Government. Each province had its distinct postal regulations. There was no harmony of action, as there was no unity or sympathy in government. In these different communities the consciousness of their anomalous position no doubt gave opportunity and strength to that party—never a very large one, but occasionally a very active one—which was in favour of annexation to the United States. Independence then was of course a dream. But when it was suggested that Canada should be left to its fate by the Government and the Empire of which she was one of the brightest jewels, men's minds turned by general consent to the question whether nothing could be done to unite her into a nation capable of supporting itself should it be obliged to become independent, or, in the hoped-for continuity of its relations to the British Empire, able to insist upon and maintain those relations on a more equitable basis. For ten years, from 1854 to 1864, here and there men of some eminence in the various provinces propounded ideas of confederation, but their speeches led to no practical results. The solution was brought about by a dead-lock in the Legislature of Canada, which then embraced the existing provinces of Ontario and Quebec. I might have cited this great confederate scheme as one of the instances of the flexibility of Canadian politics. So soon as it was seen that union was a necessity, all things gave way to it. It was settled by a convention in six months, and after considerable discussions, both at home and in the colony, the Act passed the Imperial Legislature in 1867. The with which this important measure has

been accomplished, especially considering the different interests and various populations, the diverse races and religions, whose status was intimately involved, would seem to show that after all, if public opinion throughout the empire were once to begin to turn in that direction, the diversities of position, the differences of Government, the varieties of social life, might really all be adjusted in harmony with a system of Imperial Government for Imperial purposes, and of local Government for each locality. The action of this great measure was immediately to give a national impulse and stability to the Canadian provinces, which now find themselves bound together by fiscal, postal, railway and canal, and military arrangements. The people are beginning to acquire that national sentiment which alone can enable them to put their country in the position to treat upon an equality with Great Britain as a member of the British Empire. This is a necessary precedent to Imperial federation if ever it is to be accomplished.

(To be Continued.)

COAL AT CHESTER.—We learn from a gentleman who has just returned from Lunenburg county, that considerable excitement exists in the vicinity of Chester over the discovery of unmistakable indications of prolific coal fields. The Common, near that place, has been delved into, and at a depth of only six feet, veins of the black diamond of excellent quality have been discovered. Grants have been taken out, and a company formed for the purpose of working the new leads, in shares of \$20 each, \$2 of which are paid up at present. The Lordly's Whitford's, and other principal inhabitants of Chester, are taking an active part in the enterprise, which they feel sanguine offers a rich prospect. A boring auger of suitable proportions is now being manufactured at the Truro foundry, and when that is ready, in a few days, the result of further explorations will be known. Who knows but that Lunenburg will soon take its place with Pictou and the C. B. counties, as a great coal-producing section.—*Acadian Recorder*, March 22nd.

ENGLISH SPARROWS.—In the locality of Courtenay Bay, during the past week, large flock of small brown birds have been observed, bearing close resemblance in chirp, form and color to the English sparrow. They frequent the cribwork of the railroad track, and, in spite of being barrassed with stones by the boys of the neighborhood, remain in the locality. A gentleman who has seen the English sparrows imported into Boston, believes that these birds must have migrated thence to St. John.—*St. John Telegraph*.

The sword of the sixteenth century in the Séchan collection is (says *Galignani*) a scimitar, fitted with a pistol, with a lock in the handle, a Venetian work and of extreme rarity. This weapon, of an extraordinary degree of finish, and richly damascened in silver, had been brought by Séchan from Constantinople, where he purchased it for 250*l.*, when he was engaged on the decoration of the Sultan's palace. Put up at 15,000*l.*, it was bought by Baron Rothschild for the great amount of 50,000*l.*

The conference of the Roman Catholic Bishops at Fulda is held with closed doors. The object of the meeting is to discuss and issue a pastoral letter concerning the bill before the Prussian Diet withdrawing the State grant from the Church.