

to warrant the outlay. While the Provincial Government is crippled financially, and fears are expressed that direct taxation will have to be resorted to in order to raise revenue sufficient to keep up the road and school grants, it does seem the height of folly to assume the additional and unnecessary burden of subsidizing railways.

We say unnecessary, because the Dominion Government will undoubtedly, in accordance with its well-defined policy, give all necessary assistance to local roads if appealed to in the proper spirit. In the case of the missing link, the scheme of the Local Government has failed almost entirely on political grounds, and the Dominion Government has now assumed entire control of the undertaking. Mr. Plunkett has again come to the front, and latest despatches contain the information that he has secured the necessary capital in England to proceed with the work. We must recognize the fact that both parties are guided in their assistance to railroads by the political influence that is brought to bear upon them. That such a state of affairs has arisen is most deplorable, but that it has arisen there is no doubt. The party in power at Ottawa finds that the most effective way to carry doubtful constituencies is not by wise and economical conduct of affairs, but by lavish grants for public improvements, of which railways take the lead. That these grants are popular is proved by the votes of electors, and any policy that secures votes is good enough for the politician of the present day. If the people do not object to spending the millions for which they are taxed on public works, why should the politicians? All that they require is that the expenditure shall be so made to redound to the credit of the political party which keeps them in office. They do not say this in so many words, but it is the fact nevertheless, and if Nova Scotia deserves assistance to construct railways from the Dominion Government, the less that the present Local Government has to do with them the better.

If the Local Government would sink politics, the Dominion grants might be more easily obtained, but the moment that both Dominion and Local grants are secured for a proposed line, what do we see or hear? On the one hand the organs of the Dominion Government claim that the Conservative members at Ottawa have secured the building of the road; on the other, the Liberal journals are loud in their praises of the Local Government, claiming that it has forced the Dominion into making the concessions. It seems like child's play, and entirely beneath statesmen and sensible men to be moved by trifles of this kind, but nevertheless they are moved. When the Dominion Government is called upon for another grant, the fact that the Local Government reaped the greater advantage out of the previous one, will militate against it.

If the Local Government was in a position to subsidize railways, the results would not be so bad, but as they are not in such a position, their attitude tends to antagonize Dominion grants, and to keep back most necessary works. Therefore, it would seem that the sooner this Province gives up meddling with railways, the better for all concerned.

MORE PERPETUAL MOTION.

It is generally understood and believed that the Canadian Pacific Railway has a monopoly for 20 years, so comprehensive as to exclude competition of any and every kind. A very well informed contemporary denies this, and maintains that no legal monopoly exists in any part of the N. W. of the nature supposed, but that the C. P. R. is only protected against American competition by the prohibition of the construction of any line in a south-easterly direction to the boundary line to tap the Canadian traffic and carry it to American roads, and that "there is not a word in the charter, or in any contract with the government expressed or understood, to prevent the building of lines in any other direction in either Manitoba or the Canadian Northwest."

If this be so, it certainly seems extraordinary that the Dominion Government should have risked, and even courted, provincial ill-feeling by the serious step of disallowance, under circumstances which, if the *Ottawa Evening Journal* is correct, were such as at least to admit of alternative suggestion, and probably, with the exercise of some diplomatic ingenuity, of a *modus vivendi*. The Grand Trunk, for instance, could, it is said, run a line to the western seaboard parallel to the C. P. R., and no one would have a legal right to debar them from doing so. But supposing the G. T. R. to be desirous of doing so, the construction of another costly section along the North Shore of Lake Superior is not an undertaking they would at present care to enter upon. Moreover, as the *Journal* points out, "no trans-continental railway has yet been built in America without government subsidies." Here is the push. The country has already paid heavily for the C. P. R., and, important as that great work is to the Dominion, the idea of any further demand (which would necessarily be again a heavy one) in that direction, has an ill savor in the nostrils of the public.

"Suppose," says the *Journal*, "that instead of buying out the so-called monopoly of the C. P. R., that is to say instead of paying for the privilege of diverting Canadian traffic to American railways, we use the money we have taken out of our pockets for that purpose in subsidizing the G. T. R. to go to the N. W. through Canada. The subsidy need not be altogether in cash. We could give the company a large grant of land in the N. W., and a small cash subsidy." Now this is not quite so clearly worded as might be desirable. The latter part of the sentence, however, indicates that "the money we have taken out of our pockets," should read "the money we are to have taken out of our pockets," and this is confirmed by what follows: "The European money markets were never so favorable as at present; the financial journals of London are even urging Canada to borrow more money. It would cost more to suppress a rebellion in Manitoba than it would to build ten such railways." Manitoba does not, doubtless, contemplate

rebellion, but there is all the same an angry feeling existing. If the difficulty can be met in no other way, it may be best for us to put our hands in our pockets once more, and the article in the *Journal* bears all the appearance of a distinct feeler in that direction. It was our hope that we had done with N. W. railway subsidies, but it is evident that if the G. T. R. is to be conciliated in this way, the accession to the already overwhelming strength of the government will allow of no option. The only palliative would be the increase of commercial facility, and consequently to some extent, of general prosperity, and, if the opposition is too weak to resist effectually a measure involving further taxation, it will be a good deal owing to its past crooked and pessimistic policies. Of course, as we have pointed out before, the country is increasing in population and wealth, which is in some degree an offset.

VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL.

As is only natural, the medical staff of the Victoria General Hospital differ in their ideas as to the best method of managing that institution. At present there is (we should judge from reading the minority report of the medical staff,) a wide divergence of opinion as to the best arrangement for the medical and surgical attendance. The old system provided that one physician and one surgeon should daily visit the Hospital for successive terms of three months each. This is called the "interrupted system." Under this regulation the number of patients thrown on each of the attending doctors averaged as many as from 40 to 50 daily; and it was found that no man with a busy private practice could afford to spare enough time in the Hospital to do justice to so many patients.

When the new medical staff went on duty after the resignation of the old, it was decided to improve upon the system of attendance established by their predecessors, by increasing the number of doctors in daily attendance. With this end in view, at a meeting of the Medical Board of the Hospital held April 4th, 1887, Drs. McKay and Rigby were appointed as a committee to revise the bye-laws of the institution. For various reasons the report was deferred until the quarterly meeting, which was held Oct. 4th, 1887, when Dr. Campbell was added to the committee, and the reading of the report again deferred to give the committee time to go thoroughly into the question.

"The committee met, and took up the revision of the bye-laws clause by clause, until the 9th bye-law was reached. All the members of the committee were present at the discussion of this bye-law, and devoted to it much time and consideration. It was considered under two aspects, namely, whether the attendance should be on the "interrupted" or "continuous" plan. By the *continuous* system is meant that plan by which all the members of the attending staff would be on duty together; matters being so arranged that each patient when admitted would be placed under the care of the physician or surgeon whose turn it happened to be; the patients being distributed among the members of the attending staff by rotation.

Each of these methods was seen to possess its own advantages and disadvantages, but the committee decided *unanimously* that in the *best interests of the patients* it was advisable that the *continuous* system should be adopted, and *they so recommended it* in their report, which was presented to the Medical Board at a special meeting held Dec. 19th, 1887. On that day the three members of the committee met a few minutes before the meeting was opened, and signed the report, when Dr. Campbell, who had been previously strongly in favor of the *continuous* system, signed his name, and then added a note to the effect that he approved of all the report except that part which referred to the system of attendance, as no distinct plan had been devised.

The following amendment was then moved by Dr. Farrell, seconded by Dr. Black:—"There shall be eight (8) attending physicians and surgeons, who shall divide the attendance among themselves, so that each physician and surgeon shall serve for three successive months during each year."

This amendment was passed by the following vote:—

For the amendment—Drs. Farrell, Black, Parker, T. R. Almon, Trenaman, Wickwire and Campbell (7).

Against the amendment—Drs. Oliver, Lathern, McKay and Rigby (4). Doctors Cowie and Ternan were absent when the vote was taken, and Dr. Wm. J. Almon, as president, did not vote. The minority, therefore, considering that on a full vote the question would have been settled by one vote either way, and that the *continuous* system was the most beneficial to the public, have, in a minority report of considerable length, gone into the merits of their contention, and seem to have scored a number of points in their favor. We have nothing whatever to do with the question as between the doctors, but in the interests of the patients we trust the question will not be definitely settled until the arguments advanced by the minority in their report have been thoroughly sifted.

The minority report is signed by Doctors Oliver, McKay and Rigby.

We should like to give their arguments in favor of the *continuous* system at length, but space forbids.

On one point, however, we think they are unjustly severe in their strictures on the majority. They accuse the majority of being guided in their advocacy of the "interrupted" system not by the wants of the patients, but through motives of personal convenience. Afterwards, in their arguments in favor of the "continuous" system, they say as follows:

"That system does not require more, but, on the contrary, less time from each member of the staff for attendance at the hospital, as it proposes to *decrease* the number of the sick under each physician and surgeon's care."

This being the case, we think that the report would have been more valuable had the minority confined their attention to a simple statement of facts, as the imputing of motives, creditable or discreditable, to the majority will only render the settlement of the question still more difficult.