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Comments on the Eastoing.



WHY THIS THUSNESS?—Sir John Macdonald has, within the last fortnight, excited "conflicting emotions" in the Canadian breast. By his dignified and manly bearing toward the United States in connection with the threats of Retaliation held forth by President Cleveland, he gained the universal admiration of the people of Canada; by his marked cowardice in the presence of the Canadian Pacific's latest aggression, he has earned an equal measure of public condemnation. The patriotism which shows a brave front to outside foes, while it cravenly permits an internal enemy to oppress the people, is not worth a great deal. It is not too much to say that the C.P.R. is at present acting the part of an enemy to the people

of Manitoba. It is endeavoring—and with success so far—on the strength of mere legal technicalities, to prevent the Government and people of that Province from completing their new line of railway, and thus depriving the farmers of the advantages likely to result from competition in freight rates. This is a work of enmity, and it is aggravated by the fact that the coveted privilege has been paid for in public money by the people of the Dominion at large. Nor is it too much to say that Sir John Macdonald, as head of the Government, has played the part of a coward in the case. The stoppage of the Provincial line at the C.P.R. junctions was made only that the Federal Government might be allowed, according to law, to indicate in what manner the crossing should be made, whether on the level, by bridge or by subway. There was no excuse for delay in the matter. The Federal Government has no constitutional right to forbid a crossing, as Sir John knows perfectly well, and his procrastination in making the decision as to the method of crossing, can only be explained on the ground that the C.P.R. does

not want the decision given. Van Horne is playing the waiting game; the clear object he has in view is the burking of the Provincial road until the winter sets in, and it will be rendered useless for the present season. Sir John, by his cowardice, is helping on this nefarious plot. Perhaps some day the people of Canada may know the secret of this phenomenal timidity in the case of a man who has displayed so much of the opposite quality towards Mr. Grover Cleveland.

MERCIER'S ELOPEMENT.—Mr. Mercier has, in his brief career as a political leader, achieved a brilliant success—as that word is commonly understood in Canadian politics. This means that he has managed to accomplish what he had set his heart upon, taking no account of the methods by which he has done so. Perhaps after a while the Canadian conscience will have outgrown this mean notion of what constitutes success, and when that day arrives Mr. Mercier and some other distinguished premiers in the Dominion may take a tumble from their present lofty pedestals. Already it begins to dawn on the mind of the rising generation that after all it doesn't take much to be a great Canadian statesman; anybody could "get there" providing he started out with a good supply of soft-sawder, gall and unscrupulousness in his composition. It cannot be denied that Mr. Mercier is an able man, but this does not go for much, taken by itself. Mr. Blake is a stillabler, but he has not "succeeded." As a certain eminent M.P. used to say of MacKenzie, "he was too gol-darn-perpendic'lar." Mr. Mercier isn't built that way. The secret of his success seems to be a remarkable adaptability of mind, and a keen sense of the whereabouts of the balance of power. When he entered public life it was as the leader of the Liberals, and he is now the chief of the Ultramontanes. This transformation has been wrought so gradually that a good many are not yet aware of it. Even some leading papers in this province continue to speak of Mr. Mercier as a Liberal, when in fact he has dropped every item of his original political creed that does not square with the politics of the Vatican. M. Côté sets forth the exact position of affairs in the sketch which we publish this week.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY'S SHRINKAGE.—The campaign which has just ended in the United States leaves the two great parties transposed in the minds of most outside observers. Heretofore the Republican party has been generally regarded as having some claim to the distinction of being a party of moral ideas, and the Democratic name has been associated with all that is corrupt and dishonest in politics. There can be little question in the mind of anyone who has watched the contest closely, that, this year at all events, the Republicans have outstripped their antagonists in every form of campaign villainy. If there has been any dignity at all in the contest, any attempt to argue great questions on their merits, to the Democrats belongs the credit. The Republican National Committee have shown that there was no form of lying, forgery or meanness that they were not willing to avail themselves of to carry the election; beside their record, that of the Democracy has been almost pure. On the whole, their bad record of 1884 has been put in the shade, and when we go back over the history of the party we may discover that there has been a process of moral depreciation going on from the first. From Lincoln, Sumner and Greeley, it has come to Blaine and Ingersoll and Elkins! Further comment is needless.

THE Local Government does not intend to sell the Upper Canada College grounds outright. It has wisely determined to dispose of the property on a leasehold basis, thus getting for the public till the increment of rent which would otherwise go into private pockets. As the city grows and land values increase, the perpetual revenue derivable from this already valuable piece of land will be something very handsome.

FOLLOWING out this sound and statesmanlike policy with its usual consistency, the same Government is about to sell, absolutely, a large piece of the Asylum property on Queen Street. Mr. Mowat ought to be given an early opportunity of telling the people his reason for throwing away their future profit in the one case while he conserves it in the other. One of his leading colleagues, when spoken to the other day on the subject, could give no better explanation than by saying, "We've decided to do it." This reply is highly diplomatic, but by no means conclusive. There are ugly rumors about