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CURRENT TOPICS.

The persistence of the Aqueduct Company in striving to acquire in some way or other, and for some project or other, the right to the use of the city's streets is simply amazing. Again and again have we supposed the question to be at length settled and dismissed, only to hear of its reappearance in some new type, or at least with some new change of emphasis, in the reading. We have not hitherto touched on the matter because we have always supposed that each latest rebuff would be the last. Indeed, the marvel has been and is why the promoters of the scheme, if pressing it in good faith, should desire to keep it and themselves wrapt in perpetual mystery, instead of frankly revealing their identity, establishing their ability to make the large

outlay required, and making known their reasons for believing in the feasibility of their projects. The last shape which the matter has assumed, that of a proposal to supply the city with water from Lake Simcoe, is the farthest of all from any possibility of acceptance. As we have pointed out on former occasions, the weight of argument and evidence seem so preponderatingly against any gravitation scheme, as compared with the plan of drawing from the excellent and inexhaustible reservoir at our doors, that the wonder is that the former should continue to find supporters. But apart from all considerations of locality or method, if there is any one point upon which there is practical unanimity amongst all disinterested citizens, it surely is that the business of supplying the city with water shall be retained in the hands of the corporation, and neither farmed out nor contracted out to any individual or company whatever. Present indications are that the city is much more likely to enlarge than to contract the sphere of its own direct action in such matters.

We are not disposed to attach too much importance to the newspaper accounts of the overflowing enthusiasm with which Mr. Laurier is said to have been received at every place visited during his recent tour, as indicative of a great change in the party allegiance of the majority in Western Canada. Before basing any political predictions upon that fact, we should like to have before us similar accounts of the reception accorded to Sir John Thompson, or Mr. Foster, in the course of a similar visit. The presence of one of the great political leaders of the Dominion is not an every-day occurrence in the great West. When to the fact of such presence is added the inspiration of silver-tongued oratory, the enthusiasm can be counted on with tolerable certainty. But if any one inference can be drawn with safety from the indications given in the newspaper reports, it is that there is, all over the prairies, a very strong revulsion against the protective system, and that the majority of the people are in downright earnest in demanding still further tariff reductions. Revenue tariff as the beginning of a free-trade policy was everywhere the theme of Mr. Laurier's eloquence, and was everywhere received with acclaim. Coupled with this was his approval of reciprocity, if attainable, with the United States, with whose commercial fortunes those of the people of our prairie are so closely identified. Having had some opportunities for observation in both Manitoba and in the

Territories, the writer has always deemed the steadfastness of both in sending so uniformly supporters of the Government to Ottawa one of the most striking instances of loyalty to party at the expense of personal interests which it has been his hap to see anywhere. To what extent the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, on the one hand, and the fine presence and charming oratory of Mr. Laurier, on the other, may have affected that loyalty remains to be seen. The Government will, at any rate, be wise to consider seriously what more can be done to meet the peculiarities of the situation in the West.

It is to be regretted that the British Government, in their anxiety to turn to advantage the lucid interval during which the conscience of the American people became so active that their legislators were forced to respect the rights and property of foreign authors and publishers, so far as to consent to a rather one-sided International copyright agreement, should have, apparently, forgotten the peculiar position in which Canada is placed in regard to the matter, and, seemingly, have quite ignored her views and interests. Mr. Dalby, "Honorary Secretary of the British Copyright Association," in a letter recently published in the *London Times*, even goes so far as to say that "the United States Government made the consent of Canada that American copyright should run in that Dominion a leading condition of their conceding it to the British nation." Mr. Dalby must, in this statement, have gone beyond his knowledge. As Mr. R. T. Lancefield, Librarian of the Public Library of Hamilton, says in his rejoinder, also published in the *Times*, the British Government could not bind Canada in such a way without her own knowledge and consent. The passing of the Canadian Copyright Act, and the way in which the British Government is being pressed to permit that Act to go into operation, are sufficient proof that no such consent was ever given in the name of Canada. So far as we are aware, no attempt is being made by American publishers to exercise the right for which they are said to have thus stipulated. The day has long since passed when the British Government would attempt to act for Canada in such a matter, especially since the B.N.A. Act expressly gives Canada the right to legislate on copyright. And yet it must be confessed that the refusal of the British Government to permit the Canadian Copyright Act to become law has to a considerable extent the effect of