

CURRENT EVENTS.

Having built the great Siberian railway, Russia is planning other great works for the development of her vast territory. In addition to the project of running a canal across European Russia, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, which has been for some time in contemplation, it is now proposed to join the Black and Caspian Seas by means of a canal. Still a greater project is the creation in Central Asia of a great inland sea which would increase the area of the Sea of Aral some six or seven times, and double the area of the Caspian, while joining the two seas by a navigable channel.

The situation in Venezuela is again critical. Gen. Castillo, leader of the government forces, has been killed in battle with the revolutionists.

There is a measure before the French parliament to cut a ship canal across the southwestern part of France, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mediterranean.

Shame and indignation find expression throughout the United States because of the horrible cruelties inflicted by their armies upon the natives of the Philippines. The government has ordered an investigation.

The amount of the loan asked for by the British government to meet war expenses was subscribed for ten times over.

Thousands of French Canadians working in the silk and cotton mills of the New England states are desirous of returning to their own land, and a party of them has already gone to settle in the Northwest, where other settlers from across the lines are going in increasing numbers. Mistaken ideas of the severity of the climate keep many English immigrants from going there; but it will soon be more generally known that the most desirable unoccupied land in America is in the Canadian Northwest, and that the climate is one of its attractions. An arch of Canadian cereals and grasses, to be erected in London at the time of the King's coronation, will have the effect of disabusing the minds of many who think of the Dominion of Canada as a frozen wilderness.

The King's birthday, which occurs on November 9th, is to be celebrated in England this year on the 30th of May. Probably it will be decided to celebrate it in Canada on the 24th of May, which is already a holiday.

In the new courts of justice now being established in the Transvaal, the English language only is to be used.

Wireless telegraph communication is to be established between the north of Scotland and Suderoe (South Island), in the Faroes.

On the 20th of May the new government of Cuba will be established, and Cuba will become, to a large extent, an independent nation. Will the story of South Africa be repeated, and the Cubans, taking advantage of the withdrawal of United States control, proceed to arm themselves against their benefactors? Probably their independence will not be allowed to go that far.

The Boer leaders met last month at Clerksdorp, in the southwest of the Transvaal, to consider terms of peace. There were present Mr. Steyn, as president of

Orange Free State; Mr. Schalkburger, as acting president of the Transvaal; Gen. Meyer, commander-in-chief of the Orange Free State forces; Gen. Botha, the Transvaal commander-in-chief; Gens. DeWet and Delarey, and others. It is believed that an agreement has been reached which will put an end to the war. The conference adjourned to allow the military leaders to consult with their men in the field, for this is required by Boer law. It is to meet again on the 15th, when the result will be known. In the meantime, the government is sending to South Africa men and materials to carry on the war another year or two, if required. A part of the fourth contingent of Canadian troops has already left Halifax for the seat of war.

While still sending men to the front, to help in carrying on the war, Canada is also sending women, for a far different purpose. Forty Canadian teachers are now on their way thither, to join with others in the work of elevating the people who must now become British subjects. Already, in the refuge camps of the Orange River Colony, there are more children at school than there ever were at any one time under the Free State government.

The will of Cecil Rhodes provides scholarships at an English university for two students from each state and territory of the United States of America. He had at heart not only the welfare of the British empire, but also the re-union of the English-speaking race, which, he believed, would eventually lead to universal peace.

British troops are held in readiness at Cairo to proceed to the Soudan, where trouble is again threatened.

The recent death of the grandfather of the young King of Spain will not affect the accession festivities, which are to be held the middle of this month.

To Boer settlers who may wish to come to Canada after the war is over, the Dominion government will give a free homestead in the Northwest, the usual assistance in money, and admission to the same terms of civil liberty as other settlers; and it is expected that some of the Boer prisoners will accept this offer.

The Hong Kong contingent for the coronation ceremony will go to England by way of Canada.

A party of prospectors in Sonora, the most western state of the United States of Mexico, report the discovery of a wonderful group of ancient silver mines. Indications are said to point to the working of these mines by thousands of workmen perhaps for centuries.

More than a million forest trees will be planted this spring in the state of New York, chiefly under the direction of the State College of Forestry.

The uprising in Santo Domingo is spreading, and the Dominican government is in a critical position.

Surveys have been made for a great railway in Australia, which will extend through all the southern states of the new commonwealth, and north along the eastern coast to Rockhampton, in Queensland. It will cross the great desert lying north of the Australian Bight, one of the most barren deserts in the world.

The plague is again making terrible ravages in some parts of British India.