

leading opinions as regards the constitutional legality of doing away with Provincial Parliaments are much needed just at this juncture to enable this Province to preserve and proceed to

"BUSINESS."

THE TITHE SYSTEM IN CANADA.

The following paper from the *Public Advertiser* of December 29, 1775, published in Quebec, will be of interest now. The day must come in Canada when the tithe system will be a thing of the past:—

"On the Dissatisfaction of the Canadians at the Re-establishment of Popery in Canada by the late Quebec Act.

"December 9, 1775.

"It may seem strange, Mr. Printer, to many of your readers, that the re-establishment of the popish religion in Canada, by giving the priests a legal right to their tithes, can have given the Roman-Catholics in that province any disgust, as they are known to be strongly attached to that religion: yet, that it has done so in a very high degree, I am well assured by some gentlemen of sense and credit that are lately arrived here from that country. This event does not indeed much surprise those persons who were acquainted with the state of that province before the passing of the Quebec bill; for they knew how amply the popish religion was tolerated there before that time by virtue of the capitulation, and the remarkable spirit of mildness and justice which then induced both the government of the province and the English and other protestant inhabitants of it, to observe and execute that sacred article of the capitulation to its utmost extent; and they had been witnesses of the great astonishment and satisfaction which this high degree of toleration had excited amongst the Canadians; which indeed was so great, that the noblesse of the province did not venture in their petition of December, 1773, (which was made the foundation of the late Quebec-act) to make any complaint upon this head; for the few persons who signed that petition, (who, including a boy of 13 years of age, and some other very young persons, amounted only to 65 persons, in the district of Montreal) say nothing of a want of freedom in the exercise of their religion, but complain only of the exclusion of Roman-Catholics from places of trust and profit, which is an inconvenience of a quite different kind, and which even those of the protestant dissenters from the Church of England, who comply with the terms of the toleration act, are exposed to here in England. But, to return to the toleration of the Roman-Catholic religion in Canada before the late Quebec-act,—I say, that it was so compleat as to astonish the Canadians, and give them the fullest satisfaction. The churches and chapels of the province were all left entirely in their hands: the priests possessed the glebe lands and parsonage houses: they wore their habits on all occasions and in all places, and performed their religious exercises and ceremonies in their antient and accustomed manner; and even had their public processions of the host through the streets of Quebec and Montreal, as often as they pleased, and without the least molestation or insult, or even ridicule, from the protestants in the province.—The protestants contented themselves with borrowing of the Recollet monks at Quebec, and of the Ursuline nuns at Montreal, by their leave and favour, the use of their respective chapels for one hour in the week, every Sunday morning, for the performance of divine service. Such was the toleration of the Roman-Catholic religion before the late Quebec-act. It could not be more compleat, and the Canadians were perfectly satisfied with it. Yet it was *but* a toleration; the support of the religion depended entirely on the free choice and will of the Canadians, and no legal process could be used in the courts of justice, to compel them to pay the tithes, and other former taxes, for the maintenance of their priests. And this the Canadians well knew and were much pleased with, because (they said) it made their priests more condescending and affable in their behaviour to them, and more diligent in the discharge of their duty. This being the case, I believe, Mr. Printer, it will no longer appear surprising to your readers, that the Canadians should not be pleased with that clause in the late act, which, without increasing the freedom of the exercise of their religion (for that, in truth, could not be increased) had unnecessarily and unofficially revived the compulsive obligation under which they had formerly lain, to pay the priests their tithes, but from which they had lived exempt and happy for the space of fifteen years. I say, this compulsive obligation to pay the tithes, has been revived unnecessarily and officiously, because no part of the above-mentioned petition of a few of the noblesse (though obtained, as I am credibly informed, in the most clandestine manner, and by the utmost exertion of the bishop's influence) requested the revival of it: and much less was there the least reason given to the government to suppose that the rest of the Canadians, the merchants, tradesmen, and yeomanry of the province; that is, in a word, the great body of the Canadian PEOPLE (whose wishes alone ought to have been consulted on this occasion) were in the least desirous of it. And in fact, now that this obligation is revived, they are equally surprised and disgusted at it. And, I presume, the impartial part of your readers, Mr. Printer, when they read this plain and true state of this matter, will no longer wonder at their being so.

"I am your humble servant, &c.

"P.S.—I am told that the Canadians are at this time under dreadful alarms at the apprehension of the numerous suits for tithes which they expect their priests will bring against them, as soon as any Courts of Civil Judicature shall be opened in the province. For by the late Act of Parliament, all the former Courts of Justice were abolished on the 1st day of May last, and no others were erected in their stead; the consequence of which has been, that the province has continued in a state of anarchy, at least with respect to Civil Matters, ever since the fatal day. For the new Legislative Council, (consisting of Monsieur de Bellestre, Monsieur de Contrecoeur, Monsieur La Corne de Saint Luc, and others,) to whom the delicate and difficult business of erecting new Courts of Judicature in the province, to supply the place of the old ones, was entrusted by the late Act, have not yet exercised their Legislative Talents in the discharge of this important duty. I mean on the 15th of last October: so that from the 1st of May till that day no civil action of any kind could be brought in the province. It is supposed, however, that this state of things

cannot last long; and that the Governour and his Legislative Counsellors, will soon meet again to consult upon this very urgent business. And happy will it then be for the province, if they listen more to the advice of Mr. Hey, the Chief Justice of it, (who is a Man of real understanding) than they did at their last meeting, when his suggestions in favour of the re-establishment of the Commercial Laws of England and the Trial by Jury, (to be had at the option of the parties, with the consent and approbation of the Judge) were opposed by Monsieur La Corne de Saint Luc, and the other new Roman Catholic Members of the Council, till their Meetings were broke up by the news of another invasion of the province, by the troops of the United Colonies near Montreal."

A FEW WORDS ON "TURK."

In a recent number of this journal an article called "A Plea for the Turks" was given to the public, which I think for one or two reasons—its intrinsic merit not being one of them—deserves to be commented upon. Its animus, no less than the articles of Mr. Bray's, which it attempts to criticise, is apparent in every sentence; and it shows pretty plainly what similar articles have shown before, that there are no arguments which are worthy of the name to be adduced in favour of the Ottoman Turk. The article under review is exceptionally deficient in this respect. In it I cannot find a single plea for the *genus*. It is no argument for the Turk to say that he is likely to mend his ways because England has succeeded in mending hers. It has been shown over and over again that he is irrepressible; that he has always been cruel, lustful and faithless; that his religion renders him specially ineligible to have Christians under his control. Edward A. Freeman, the eminent historian, has drawn a fearful picture of his rule. He says: "One charter after another has been put forth to say that all the Sultan's subjects, of whatever religion, shall be equally under his protection, and have equal rights. Yet the Christians are everywhere dealt with as bondsmen; the Mahometan is armed, and the Christian is unarmed; the Mahometan rules, and the Christian has to obey; the Mahometan sits in the so-called courts of justice, and refuses to take the evidence of the Christian against the worst Mahometan offender. Therefore no Christian is safe for a moment in anything. Whatever wrong is done to him, he has no redress; his life, his property, the honour of his family, are at the mercy of every Turk who thinks good to deal with them as he chooses."

It is no argument in favour of the Ottoman Turk to say because Mahometans in one age of the world's history compared favourably with Christian Europe there may be a possibility of a revival of former virtues among the followers of Mahomet. Christian Europe has become highly civilized and may go on progressing, but how has it been with the Turk? Reform has been alien to him; he is the same now as he was five hundred years ago. He came into Europe and enslaved Christian people on their own soil, and they have remained enslaved ever since. As Freeman says, his rule has been the rule of cruelty, faithlessness and brutal lust, and cannot be reformed. He cannot be reformed, because of his religion. Goldwin Smith, writing on this subject, says:—"If there is anything decisively proved by the experience of history, it is that Islam, the Military religion of a plundering Bedouin, extend its borders as widely as you will, settle it as long as you please, place at its command wealth and slaves to the utmost measure of its lust, never can produce civilization—moral, political or even material. Industry, liberty, science, progress of every kind, are essentially alien to it. Militarism, despotism, fatalism, polygamy, concubinage, slavery, cleave to it as parts of its nature, everywhere and in all times. . . . Of all systems it seems to be the most effectual for destroying spiritual, moral, social and political life ever devised by man—the history of genuine Mahometanism—has been the rush of conquest, followed by the stagnation of decay."

It is a sad commentary on the value of human opinion that there is a numerous party, both in England and Canada, in sympathy with this race, in utter disregard of their delinquencies. This party defends the Turk and the policy of the British Government against all adverse criticism, with an ardour and persistency truly admirable, if it could be rendered intelligible. The mere fact that some sound ground-work for this defence is lacking matters nothing, and the clearer this is shown the more tenaciously do the Turks' friends adhere to their position. "Turk" being of this class, and pugnaciously inclined, goes in on his hobby, careless apparently whether he possess any qualification for his task. He makes sad work of it, as witness the following specimen. He says: "I do repudiate most strongly the monstrous assumption that England, as represented by its present Government, had otherwise than deeply at heart the interests of the Christian subjects of Turkey. She refrained, however, from playing into the hands of Turkey's great enemy." I do not suppose that "Turk" would find anybody disposed to quarrel about this abstract question of the heart, nor do I believe very many would deny that England has refrained from playing into the hands of Russia, except it may be in regard to the recent acquisition of the island of Cyprus, which Russia may seek to counterbalance by making extensive annexations in Central Asia. I fail, however, to perceive the utility of repudiating the assumption. What earthly use can "Turk" make of the deep feeling of sympathy which he imagines the British Government harbours for the downtrodden and oppressed Christians of Turkey, when its only outcome was the endeavour to seat more firmly in their position this race of brutal, degenerate oppressors, which has held the Christians of Turkey in bondage for five hundred years? What does this argument amount to? Simply this. According to "Turk," England felt deeply the wrongs of the oppressed peoples, but didn't move a hand in their defence, for fear of playing into the hands of Turkey's great enemy, or of making herself the laughing-stock of Europe. Think you, "Turk," that Lord Beaconsfield would admit either the one or the other?

It is notorious that the British Government never for one moment allowed sentiment of any kind to interfere with what it deemed its political interests in the Eastern Question. It made up its mind to thwart Russia, and it did not matter a pin whether Russia went to war actuated by mere sentiment or by a desire for aggrandisement.—Turkey must not be made to pay the penalty of her crimes under any circumstances; she must be left alone. But she was not left alone, and the result is, she has received her death-blow, which the British