

## CURRENT EVENTS.

Despite the war and turmoil of the present day the cause of international arbitration continues to gain ground. The nations that are now agreed to submit their disputes to arbitration are Britain and France, Britain and Italy, France and Italy, and a treaty just announced between France and Spain. Belgium and the Netherlands are understood to be arranging similar treaties with Britain. France and Italy and Spain and Portugal have come to a like understanding with Britain and each other. It seems quite probable also, that Britain and France will soon enter into treaties of arbitration with the United States.

The war in the east is in progress. Russia and Japan are in deadly conflict. As news is being suppressed by both sides it is impossible at the moment to give an accurate idea of the situation. Japan's masterly initial stroke at Port Arthur, followed up by other deeds of daring, has crippled the Russian fleet and given the command of the sea to the island nation. This allows her to move her transports at will and large bodies of her troops are now at Seoul and other points in Korea. Here they have the advantage of being among friends, as Japan and Korea have completed a treaty, by which the latter places herself practically in the hands of the former, and Japan guarantees the independence and territorial integrity of Korea. Acting upon this treaty, the Korean government is said to have ordered its troops into the field to the support of Japan. The standing army of Korea consists of seventeen thousand men, with European methods, having been drilled by Russian officers. It is the uncertainty as to the ultimate disposition of Korea which has led to the present strife. At the close of the war between Japan and China, the latter agreed that Japan should occupy Port Arthur. To this Russia objected, and she succeeded in getting other powers to join her in the protest so that Japan was forced to give up this strong strategic point. Almost immediately Russia got possession of the place and proceeded to fortify it. This with her persistent continued occupation of Manchuria in spite of all promises to retire therefrom, led Japan to fear her encroachment on Korea; and the occupation of this peninsula by a hostile power would threaten the national existence of Japan. As in the case of the China-Japanese war, the scene of land operations between the present opposing forces will be the northern part of Korea. Just what strength the active support of Korea will yield to Japan is problematical, although the friendly feeling of the inhabitants, both there and through Manchuria, will make the way behind the advancing

Japanese comparatively safe, while the Russians will be obliged in all their operations to leave strong guards along their route to protect them from an unfriendly citizenship. The Koreans in olden times gave a good account of themselves in warfare, but are now described as the most gentle, lamb-like creatures, and essentially a nation of repose. Whether the present situation, where they seem to be disposed to suit the purposes of their neighbors, will infuse into them any national life and energy remains to be seen. The strength of the coolie is said to be phenomenal. He will carry a bale of goods of four hundred pounds weight for miles and is really the beast of burden of the country, as there are few carts and few roads fit for them. In the meantime China is displaying a restless activity, and Chinese troops are said to be moving north into Manchuria. The success of Japan at the outset has doubtless made an impression on the Chinese, and as they are supposed to resent the continual encroachments of Russia, a cancellation of their declaration of neutrality may occur at any time.

Baltimore has now the distinction of being the scene of one of the great fires of the world. The business portion of the city, including many of the best modern "fire-proof" buildings, has been completely demolished. War experts were sent by the federal government with large quantities of gun-cotton and assisted in fighting the fire by blowing up buildings in the district. The money loss is tremendous, but strange to say only one death is reported, and practically no one was rendered homeless, although it is estimated that 50,000 people were thrown out of employment.

The nickel supply of the world is at present derived from two sources, the most important of which is the Sudbury district in Ontario, the other being the French penal colony of New Caledonia in the Southern Pacific. As nickel is now indispensable in the manufacture of modern armor plate and guns, the government of Ontario has withdrawn from sale a large tract of land in the nickel district, with the hope that the Imperial Government will acquire it and reserve the nickel for its exclusive use. Should the British government do this it is not unlikely that France will take similar steps in regard to its nickel supply, and thus place all the nickel output in the hands of these two nations.

The governor of German East Africa, in a recent visit to the interior, used a young zebra as a saddle animal, and found that he climbed hills and waded rivers more readily than the mules. He is now gathering a number of these animals to be broken to service, and thinks that they can be kept more cheaply and will be less liable to sickness than mules.

The Board of Trade of Sydney, N. S., has passed a resolution urging that Canada should acquire the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.