

That Man Swettenham

NO other man has achieved so much reputation in the past few weeks as Sir James Alexander Swettenham, Governor of Jamaica. He has served in the diplomatic service during the main part of a life of sixty-one years. Ceylon, Cyprus, the Straits Settlements and British Guiana have been the scenes of his labour. He set an example of industry and hard work which is almost unequalled in his class. Apparently he is bluff, courageous and democratic. A story of an experience in British Guiana runs as follows:

He was never a respecter of persons. One day a "big gun" went to Government House to argue with him about a certain measure he was engaged in drafting for the consideration of the Local Legislature.

"If you do it that way you will hurt us," he said.

"And who are you that you should not be hurt if the masses of the people are benefited?" thundered the Governor. "Go away, sir, go away; and mark me, I am Governor here, and I govern for the people, not for selfish minorities!"

Feeding School-Children

IN the British House of Commons, there is a member named Dr. McNamara whom people say is a Canadian because he was born here while his father spent some time in this country on military duty. There is some talk of this gentleman being the next Secretary of State for the Colonies. Just now he is interesting himself in the school-children of London. An Act, which came into force on January 1st, empowers local educational authorities to provide for feeding the children if they find it necessary. Where the parents can afford it, they pay the cost price of the meals, but otherwise the cost comes out of the rates.

School canteens have long been a feature of the French primary schools, and have also been introduced into English secondary schools in the form of meals for day pupils. Dr. McNamara thinks the plan should be developed farther. It is good for the children to meet together for a mid-day meal, and good soup and pudding is better than a slice of bread wrapped in a bit of brown paper and munched in a corner of one of the class-rooms. The mothers would find it a great saving of money, time and worry, and they would know that whatever happened the children would be sure of one good meal each day.

The plan, Dr. McNamara maintains, is a logical development of compulsory attendance at school. When that was first introduced in 1870, tens of thousands of children were sent to school who would never have gone otherwise. Free text-books equipped them for study. The free mid-day meal would further fortify the physical child for its mental work.

The plan might be kept in mind by those interested in consolidated schools in Canada. Provision should be made for supplying at least hot tea or warm milk for children who must bring cold luncheon. In every country school to-day there are children eating mid-day lunches without anything to drink but cold water. Some of the indigestion and constipation so prevalent in this continent must be traced to meals which do not comprise either hot soup or warm drink.

An Apology to Kansas

A Washington paper recalls the incident, just about six years old, when King Edward apologised to the democratic folk of Kansas who had sent him a resolution of sympathy on the death of Queen Victoria. The secretary in replying evidently mistook Kansas for British territory inasmuch as he thanked the "loyal" people of that state for their message.

Now Kansas is an excitable community, being the

home of Carrie Nation and other freak reformers. When the reply signed "Knollys" hurtled into that home of liberty, freedom shrieked as she had not done since Kosciusko fell, and international complications threatened in an acute form. But a protest in some shape or other reached Buckingham Palace. Unkind persons declared that Kansas hinted darkly that she would send Carrie Nation over to superintend the side-board decorations of Windsor Castle. Anyway, a formal retraction of "loyal" and another misleading adjective was made, and Kansas settled down once more to the beef industry while Carrie remained on this side of the Atlantic. Thus early in his reign did King Edward show a disposition to secure peace without palaver.

The Priest's Bon Mot

ONE of the editorial staff of The Canadian Courier was in a Toronto street car on the day after the election of Archbishop Sweatman as head of the Anglican Church in Canada. Entered an old friend in the person of the rector of one of the Roman Catholic parishes in the west end of the city. The newspaperman asked after the health of Archbishop O'Connor—the reverend father's diocesan—and then remarked:

"By the way, Father, we have two Archbishops in Toronto now."

The priest's Irish eyes twinkled. "I don't know that we have any," said he. "O'Connor's out of the city."

Verily, the Roman Catholic view of the Apostolic Succession was doing business right there and then.

Indian Fakirs

INDIA is full of devotees. In every populous district and even in waste places the traveller will find them. The idea is similar to that which in the Middle Ages drove the monks and anchorites into isolation and poverty. The notion that the mortification of the body is meritorious as a means of salvation from sin or impurity rests upon the soul of India like a pall. The space of many pages would not be sufficient to enumerate all the forms of bodily degradation and mutilation which the depraved ingenuity of the devotees has invented wherewith to mortify themselves and prepare for happiness hereafter. One superstitious wretch will sit starving in the dirt or will take only so much food as barely to feed the fire of life. Such emaciation and wretchedness are not to be seen otherwise in the world. Another stands and repeats senseless mutterings out of the sacred books. A third goes about with a living snake drawn through a slit in his tongue. Another hangs a weight to some bodily organ until it is drawn out of all semblance to nature. Another thrusts an arrow or sword through his limbs and still another holds up his hands with nails and spikes driven through them. The distortion of the body into some horrible and repulsive form is thought to be most efficacious. Many devotees take a strange attitude and hold it by force of will until the freedom of the given organs is destroyed. Some will hold up their arms straight above their heads for days and weeks and months until they become wasted away and rigid as bone. Others by contortion twist their muscles out of shape until they are no more able to return to symmetry or perform their office. And so on and on through an endless variety of tortures and torments self-inflicted by a superstition which admits of no limit or palliation. Strange to say, some of these devotees are versed in all the learning of the vedas and the shastras, famous teachers who expounded the Sanskrit texts to thousands of disciples beneath the branches of a wild fig tree, or under the shadow of a great rock.