

## CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1873.

A remarkable feature about the Ministerial crisis which has just occurred is the perfect calm with which it has been received throughout the country. Judging from the fierceness and acrimony of the contest, up to the last moment, one would have expected scenes of desperation on the part of the vanquished and demonstrations of enthusiastic joy on the part of the conquerors. Nothing of the kind has happened. The change has been accepted almost as a matter of course; by the Conservatives with manly resignation, by the Reformers with a modest reserve. We augur well from this disposition of the public mind. It points to a healthy recognition of the superiority of principles over men. There is another subject for congratulation. The new Ministry enter upon office under favorable circumstances. They find the country in a prosperous condition. The constitutional system, inaugurated seven years ago, has had time to work fully and produce results of substantial benefit. All the departments of the public service have been well managed and the fruits of their operations are manifest on all sides. The late Ministry have this satisfaction—that they have displayed ability and conscientious industry. It is to be hoped that the new Cabinet will take up the work just where they find it and make it their endeavour to rival the intelligent zeal of their predecessors. Of the composition of the new Government we had said little. It is confessedly only transitional, and important changes may be expected. Messrs. Mackenzie and Blake are, beyond cavil, equal to the important responsibilities they have assumed, and while reserving an opinion on their future policy, we may safely record our conviction that the Government of the country is safe in their hands. The other Ontario Members of the Cabinet are unimportant. We had expected a stronger representation from Quebec. With all proper respect for the character and ability of Mr. Dorian, we have already said, and we repeat, that his days of political usefulness are gone. His career has been almost synchronous with that of Sir John, and where the latter must be allowed to have succeeded, the former must be judged to have failed. Indeed, Messrs. Dorian and Holton, as leaders of the Lower Canadian Rouge party, are failures and cannot be resuscitated. It was a good idea of Mr. Mackenzie's to introduce a Prince Edward Island Member into his Cabinet. The pity is that he could not extend the same favour to Manitoba and British Columbia. With the growth of the country and the admission of new provinces, the present distribution of seats will have to be altered. So long as the ratio is preserved, Ontario can be as well represented in the Privy Council by two members, as by five. So far as we have had leisure to look over our exchanges, we find that the new Ministry have been received in a spirit of fairness by their adversaries. Indeed, the whole tone of the press has improved within the past fortnight. One or two Reform papers continue to abuse the fallen administration, but that was to be expected. As a rule, the journals of the present Opposition have set a good example of moderation. Most of them promise to give the Government a full trial, pending which they will offer no unnecessary opposition. This is a most creditable example. Several papers have seized the occasion to proclaim their independence. The present is certainly a favourable opportunity to cast off the old trammels of party allegiance. Let the dead past bury its dead. Before us we have a body of men, who have been out of office for twenty years, and who may therefore be regarded as really new. They are beginning life, as it were. They open a second volume in the history of Confederate Canada. Let us forget their record as oppositionists, and regard them merely in the altered light of rulers. The opportunity is a splendid one to judge them purely on their merits. If they do well, let all independent papers strengthen their hands by kind word and genial counsel. If they blunder, more especially if they drift into the faults with which they so violently charged their adversaries—and, unfortunately, this is the bent of human nature—let the press show spirit enough to oppose and denounce them.

The news from Manitoba and the North West is of a stirring and withal gratifying character. The Legislature of the Prairie Province have revised and enlarged the basis of representation and taken preliminary steps towards widening their territory. Ample provision is made for the enforcement of the claims of new settlers, and while the rights of the Metis will be scrupulously maintained, the ever increasing white population will have its rights secured for and enforced. From the North West proper the latest intelligence is that Lieutenant-Governor Morris has concluded a treaty with the Indian Chief Manitobasis, whereby 4,000 Red Men, bringing with them 55,000 square miles of land, are incorporated into the Dominion. The terms of the treaty are most liberal. Lands as reserves, not exceeding in all a square mile for every family, are to be given. Schools are to be established whenever any band asks for them. Twelve dollars are to be given for this year to every man, woman and child of the population, and five dollars per annum for ever afterwards. To the chief men, not exceeding two to each band, twenty dollars a year for ever. When a band settles down and actually commences to farm on their land they are to receive two horses,

one spade, one scythe, and one axe for every family actually settled; one plough for every ten families; five harrows for every twenty families; and a yoke of oxen, a bull and four cows for every band, and enough barley, wheat and oats to plant the land they have actually broken up. Canada has enjoyed for centuries—first under French rule and later, under British domination—an enviable reputation for the consideration and kindness it has displayed towards the Aborigines resident within her limits. The settlements of Lorette, Caughnawaga and Two Mountains, in the Province of Quebec; the colonies of Brantford and Manitoulin Island, in that of Ontario, testify to the humanity of our laws towards the poor Indian. We have no desire to institute invidious comparisons, but certainly the United States might learn a lesson from Canada in this respect. It is a source of gratification to find that the same policy of conciliation is being pursued in the immense territory of the North West. The good example cited above will tell with most beneficial effect in the wigwams along the margin of the Saskatchewan where there are thousands of tribes roaming up and down, and the kind words of Governor Morris will be repeated from mouth to mouth at the camp fires of the Black Feet, under the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, as well as among the Crows and the Flat Heads, of the Columbia.

We have not attached much importance to the comments of the English press on late Canadian affairs. It is not that we contest its superiority in general information and the tone of high principle which usually characterize its letter-press. But in the present instance we are disposed to question its minute knowledge of the accessories of our late unhappy transactions, holding that, without such knowledge, it is impossible to pronounce a correct opinion on the issues at stake. An English writer may judge a Canadian question on general principles of constitutional law or parliamentary practice, but he is not so competent to formulate a verdict on a point which is involved in the complexities of Canadian social habits. As a rule, Canadian editors are better able to write on English questions, than English editors are on Canadian matters, for the reason that many of our leading journalists are English-born, and all of them take a filial interest in whatever occupies the British mind. And yet what importance would a Canadian's comments on a point of English polity be allowed to possess? The Pacific Scandal was so interwoven with our free and easy modes of conducting elections, it was so intimately connected with the public and private characters of the men who figured in it, that, to appreciate it properly, a full knowledge of these details was absolutely required. This knowledge no Englishman, however clever, could have. It is remarkable that none of our American neighbours had it, and the consequence was that we did not read a single exhaustive article on the subject from an American pen. No doubt the English papers had to take cognizance of our troubles. No doubt, too, they had to write as if they knew all about them. The *Times*, in especial, which puts in a claim to omniscience and arrogates to itself the right of posing as a master on every possible subject of domestic and foreign policy, had to put on its grand airs and lay down the law to us in formal, dogmatic phrases. We paid no heed to its harmless thunder all along, but when, in a late article, it intimates that unless the Canadian Parliament takes action in the Pacific business, it will be a question whether the Imperial authorities should not interfere, we thought it had more than ever forfeited its claim to our respectful consideration. That the Canadian people and Parliament are well able to take care of themselves, their action on the memorable 5th of November abundantly proves. But even if they had sustained Sir John A. Macdonald, it would have been nobody's concern except our own, and we are confident the able men who preside over the Colonial Office would have recognized our perfect fitness to decide the matter. That certain Canadian papers, in the blind heat of partisan warfare, should have cited the *Times* and other British journals, in double-headed display headings, is natural enough, but the importance they attached to them is evinced from the scorn they manifested whenever these same papers uttered a word contrary to their preconceived views.

The financial condition of the United States at the present moment is fraught with important lessons for political economists in the Dominion. The approach of winter which, it is conceded on all sides, will weigh with dread severity upon the poor of the large cities and the thousands dependent for their sustenance on the mills, mines and manufactures of the Eastern and Middle States, gives to this topic an importance which might be overlooked at a more favourable season. The Government of the United States owes \$2,000,000,000, on which it is paying, as interest, an average of rising six per cent in currency. At least three-fourths of that amount is due to foreign capitalists. Furthermore, every State of the Union has debts amounting in the aggregate to \$190,000,000. Every county, city and town of every State owes debts amounting in the aggregate to about one-half as much as the debts of the States. American railroads owe a bonded debt of \$600,000,000. The interest on the national debt being \$120,000,000, this amount has to be paid annually abroad and to this the product of the gold and silver mines of the

United States contribute only \$50,000. The rest must be paid from the products of the soil exported abroad. What adds to the difficulty is that American imports exceed American exports. To meet this balance is precisely the heart of the problem. That the American people cannot go on borrowing and increasing their indebtedness, without a reasonable prospect of paying in the near future, is evident from the fearful crash which lately took place in New York. That catastrophe has revealed the lamentable ignorance of the people as to the real condition of their financial affairs. When the first failure took place, we were assured that it would affect only the brokers of Broad and Wall streets. But subsequent events show that the industry of the whole country has been shaken and that some of the strongest houses in the East and West have had to go under. At the present writing, the depression is very great and the prospect on the eve of winter is decidedly gloomy. Congress is about to meet. Naturally the people look to it for relief and it is to be feared that the pressure will be so overwhelming as to force the Finance Committee into some new measure of inflation. The reason given, and it is a plausible one, will be that a large issue of paper is necessary for the immediate relief of the New York banking firms, who will use their funds for the moving of the Western crops. Secretary Richardson is supposed to be hostile to this movement, and it is to be hoped that he will prevail in refusing a remedy which will only aggravate the disease. It is surely a pity that the poor should suffer during the inclement season, but it is likewise necessary, for the pointing of the lesson, that the class of adventurers and speculators should be pinched also and forced into habits of moderation, for only thus can a reform be expected in the management of American finances.

Another steamboat horror is reported, this time in Canadian waters. On Wednesday week the "Bavarian," a new steamer of the Canadian Navigation Company's Line, was burnt on Lake Ontario, fifteen miles off Oswego. Fortunately the number of passengers on board was small or the loss of life must have been very great. As it is twelve to fourteen persons, including the captain, are missing. The accident is attributed by the Superintendent of the Company to the breaking of the walking-beam, the forward part of which, being in connection with the connecting-rod of the engines, was thrown forward, breaking through the front of the saloon on to the main-deck, where were stored some twenty-five barrels of spirits. The beam, being of great weight, smashed in the barrels, causing the spirit to run into the fire-hole, where it ignited. If this theory be correct the accident was to all appearance unavoidable. But even admitting it to have been so there can be no doubt that had there been the least attempt at discipline on board the horrors of the disaster might have been very considerably mitigated. When the fire was discovered all was thrown into confusion. It was a general *sauvage-qui-peut*. Two boats were launched, in one of which the pilot and eight seamen shoved off to the shore, and in the other the mate, purser and eleven others escaped. There appears to have been no attempt at no thought even, of saving the passengers, five of whom perished miserably. Three of these were ladies. The very captain was allowed to perish, although, it is stated, the mate's boat grazed the plank to which he was clinging. This latter statement is utterly incomprehensible, as is that that it was found impossible to save the women. On the one hand it is said that they were seen on the bow of the burning vessel shrieking for help; on the other the purser avers that he heard no shrieks or screams. Whence then comes the report that they were seen crying for assistance? Some one must have seen them. Of the conduct of the pilot and the eight men who escaped with him no words can describe the blackness. Not only did they leave their fellow-creatures to die, but they actually deprived the perishing mortals of the means to save their lives. The boat in which these nine escaped was capable of holding sixteen souls more, two over the number of the lost. Yet without a thought for anything or anybody but their own worthless selves, when they were in no actual danger they deliberately abandoned their fellow-creatures to their fate and pushed off for shore. In the sight of heaven, if not before a human tribunal, these nine are surely guilty of manslaughter. Another question that presents itself is with regard to the means of saving life available on such occasions as this. We all know that the lake and river steamers are compelled by law to carry, and do carry the necessary apparatus. It is hardly possible that in the case of the "Bavarian" the fire made such rapid progress as to allow of no time to employ the usual means. Surely there were life-preservers enough on board. The whole sad affair is at present wrapped in a fog of mystery which we fear will never be satisfactorily cleared away. We trust, however, that a thorough investigation will be made, and that the pilot and his eight companions whose insubordination in the first place, and whose cowardice and selfishness in the next, contributed in great measure to the death of the fourteen missing individuals will meet with the heavy punishment they deserve. Men of this kind are not to be kept to their duty by any ordinary rules, and perhaps it is a pity that some one was not found strong enough and bold enough at the outbreak of the fire to compel them perforce to remain at their posts.