

The Canadian Spectator.

VOL. II.—No. 47.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1879.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM.

CONTENTS:

THE TIMES.	THINGS IN GENERAL.
MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.	POETRY.
THE OLD MASTERS IN MONTREAL.	CORRESPONDENCE.
THE CRIME OF RESPECTABILITY.	PRIZE QUESTIONS IN CANADIAN HISTORY.
CONVENTIONALITY.	TRADE, FINANCE, STATISTICS.
THE BRITISH UNIFORM COLOUR.	CHESS.
INTELLECTUAL YOUNG LADIES.	MUSICAL.

THE TIMES.

There is much speculation afloat as to what M. Chapleau will do in the matter of the Legislative Council. For himself he has carefully abstained from any expression on the point; and when he has been compelled to allude to the change in the position of parties in the Legislative Assembly, the adjournment by M. Joly, and not the action of the Councillors, has been credited with being the cause of that change. Evidently the *Bleus* are divided in policy, so far as this question is concerned; for while Mr. Thomas White, M.P., with characteristic recklessness, declared an opinion in justification of the Councillors, Mr. Flynn and Mr. Lynch and others have been careful to explain their entire disapproval of what they did. Of course these are simply electioneering tactics, and before now it has been found convenient that the same party should hold two or three sets of opinions to suit the different classes of voters, but I do not see how M. Chapleau is to shirk the matter when the House is opened again. By appointing Mr. Ross, who led the majority of the Council when they stopped the supplies, as Speaker of the Upper House, he has not merely condoned the act, but he has publicly rewarded it. This is nothing more nor less than a tacit avowal of his approval of what they did; and this approval he is bound to justify, or at least maintain, in the House. That is precisely the position M. Joly took after the Letellier *coup*; he undertook the full responsibility of the dismissal of the De Boucherville Government, challenged the criticism and votes of the House, and then carried it to electors for their decision. If M. Chapleau is as brave and as disinterested, as he claims to be, he will follow the same course. If he refuses to do that, we shall be driven to the conclusion that he is prepared to take, and hold office under any terms, and that he is content to be, virtually, the nominee of the fifteen Councillors who stopped the supplies.

There will be no need for that, it is said—the majority in the House must decide it:—Yes, but how was that majority made up? M. Chauveau, Paquet and some others said they were actuated by a patriotic desire to make a strong Coalition Government possible; but the *Bleus* now laugh the very idea of Coalition to scorn. An election would involve a great deal of excitement and expense, they say,—very good, since we have agreed to experiment in government we must expect to pay for the luxury. Constitutional Government has had its legs broken by our French rulers; before we consent to break its back, let us by all means spend a little more money in another appeal to the people. If they want a despotism, let them have it; but let us ask them, once for all, what they really have determined upon.

M. Joly should prepare a careful impeachment of the Legislative Council based on the Constitution, and introduce it in a speech not too long, and full of all the telling points he can bring together—consisting of criticism, not defence; let his best speakers only follow him; and if he does not score heavily against the present Government I shall be disappointed.

The *Gazette* is not quite so decided as Mr. White in its approval of the action taken by the Councillors, and spends its time in fighting

with the *Star* and the *Witness* about “consistency.” It asks: “Why were you not indignant when M. Letellier dismissed the De Boucherville Government?” But surely the *Gazette* has lived long enough in an ordinarily moral atmosphere to know that “two blacks do not make a white”? What if the *Star* and the *Witness* did not get angry and scold M. Letellier for the misuse he had made of his powers, are we to allow that a first wrong is a good reason for a second? Is it come to this, that any political iniquity—any violation of the Constitution—any injustice to the people—may be perpetrated by a party if only it can be made to bear some analogy to previous acts by the opposite party? “Be consistent;” says the *Gazette*, “you failed to find cause for the abuse of M. Letellier—so, be quiet now about the Councillors.” Following its own logical method, why does the *Gazette* rage against M. Joly and his party so much? Why does it so loudly condemn the Dominion Liberals? They only did a few things after the pattern of their predecessors in office. The “Big Push” and “rusting steel rails” were not at all original sins, and why did the *Gazette* fume so madly about them? Let us have consistency by all means, but in the advocacy of what is right, and not in what is wrong.

Had the *Gazette* been a little more trained in logic, it would see that the method of argument adopted in its columns is a bald confession that the act of the Councillors in stopping the Supplies is of precisely the same character as M. Letellier's ill-advised and untimely use of his power; and as M. Letellier has been dismissed from office on account of what he did, the Legislative Council should in all justice suffer the same fate. The Dominion Cabinet beheaded the offending Lieutenant-Governor, avowedly, because he had committed an unwarrantable and illegal act which had destroyed his usefulness, and not because of any damage he had done to the party; and unless the *Gazette* is prepared to say: The Councillors did wrong just as M. Letellier did, but we are not going to bring any punishment upon them, because they have helped our party; it must say that they deserve the same retribution as that which fell on M. Letellier. I would ask the *Gazette*: Is the act of the Council similar to that of Lieut.-Governor Letellier? If not, what is the difference? If it is, how should the case be met? And then: Was the decapitation of M. Letellier in the interests of the Conservative party merely, or in the defence of justice for all parties?

That was a fine rhetorical outburst when M. Chapleau exclaimed before the astonished natives of Adamsville: “We find moths in clothing, worms at the roots of trees, rats at the foundations of houses, and Trenholme at the back of Ministers.” No wonder that there was “long continued shouting and applause.” But what did the orator mean? Was it to liken Mr. Trenholme to moths in clothing, worms at the roots of trees, and rats at the foundations of houses? But moths usually destroy clothing when they get into it; and worms do the same thing for trees; and rats are at least a nuisance. Is Mr. Trenholme, with his grave charges of dishonesty, really a moth in the Prime Ministerial garments—is he really as a worm at the root of the last growth in the Provincial hot-house? I can very well imagine M. Chapleau's disgust when he saw that already there were holes in his “clothing,” and that the tree was beginning to show signs of decay, and that the foundations of the house were being honey-combed by rats—it must have been annoying. But how can Mr. Trenholme do all that and yet be “at the back of Ministers”? To be at “the back of” any one is usually intended to indicate support, and Mr. Trenholme never meant to do that. Altogether, M. Chapleau was “mixed,” as the Americans say. Metaphors are dangerous weapons in the hands of any speaker; they should only be used by skilful men when they are cool.