

CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

MR. BLAKE'S speech against Orange Incorporation has raised again the old question as to the relations between Roman Catholics and the State. It is clear that if no Roman Catholics could be good citizens there could have been no good citizens in Europe before the Reformation. The framers of the Great Charter, the founders of the Italian, German, Flemish and Swiss liberties, all were Roman Catholics. But they were Roman Catholics in whose breasts allegiance to their country or their municipality held the first place. They were above all things patriots. This they proved by taking the Pope by the beard as often as he encroached upon national or municipal rights. They left representatives in those English Roman Catholics who, with Howard of Effingham at their head, bore arms for England against the Armada; in the Gallican Churches both of Old and New France, and even among the great Roman Catholic families of England in later days, one of whose chiefs, the Duke of Norfolk, so deeply resented the violation of national feeling by the "Papal Aggression" that he passed over from the Roman Catholic to the National Church. With Roman Catholics of this school a national government, even if it were Protestant, might dwell in peace, though it would have some difficulties about public education; and the Protestant government of Canada did dwell in peace with the Gallicans of Quebec. But a widely different kind of Roman Catholicism was bred by the struggles of the Reformation and the antagonism of the Papacy to the Protestant governments; and the anti-national spirit of Ultramontanism has been growing more intense up to the present hour. "I am a Catholic first and an Englishman afterwards" were the very words of Lord Petre, an English Roman Catholic of the Ultramontane school. The embodiment and the restless propagator of Ultramontanism has been the Society of Jesus, an organization of cosmopolitan intriguers absolutely without country or national tie, which sees in every Protestant government an enemy. Mr. Blake could hardly pretend that Ultramontanism and Jesuitism were not political, seeing that the Jesuit was for nearly two centuries the arch instigator of religious wars in Europe, that his machinations brought about the Swiss Sonderbund, and that his influence over a foolish and devout Empress was the principal cause of the quarrel between France and Germany. The Encyclical and the Syllabus are an open declaration of war against religious liberty, against liberty of education, against the liberty of the press, against the independence of the State, against those claims of the people which are the basis of popular government, against the organic principles of Protestant civilization. Nor in Quebec, where the Jesuit has now decisively triumphed over his Gallican opponents, does he fail to give practical expression to his principles, religious and political. "The new school teaches that the Roman Catholic Episcopate in Canada is as much above the civil power as the supernatural is superior to the natural; that the Pope is the Church, and that the Church contains the State; that every human being is subject to the Pope; that the Pope has the right to command the obedience of the King and to control his armies; that the civil authority can place no limit to the ecclesiastical power; and that it is a pernicious doctrine to allege that it has the right to do so; that to deny the priests the right to use their spiritual authority to control the elections is to exclude God from the regulation of human affairs; that civil laws which are contrary to the pretences of Rome are null and void; and that the judiciary has no power to interpret the true sense of laws so passed, which are, in fact, not laws at all; that civil society is inferior to the Church; and that it is contrary to the natural order of things to pretend that the Church can be cited before the civil tribunals." Such are the averments of Mr. Charles Lindsey in his "Rome in Canada," which is the most elaborate study of the subject, and is devoted to making the allegations severally good. An alliance between Mr. Blake and Sir Hector Langevin, therefore, would apparently be fruitful of thorny questions, at least on the side of Mr. Blake, who would find that even the rule of publicity which he deems so essential to the health of the body politic was not always observed in the conclaves of the Society of Jesus.

SCARCELY was the ship of the Pacific Railway Company floated off the sandbank by the vote in aid, when the cry was raised that it had grounded again. Colour was given to the report by the somewhat faltering language of the Minister of Railways, but the alarm was entirely unfounded. No demand for further assistance was ever made. Yet it is not difficult to imagine a source for the belief, apart from the designs or the credulity of malice. A mortgage over the whole of the stock could not fail to render it for the time unsalable, especially as it was already weak, and powerful enemies were interested in decrying it. Its decline in the market was likely to be out of proportion to the amount of the loan, and

the land bonds being included with it in the mortgage, would share its fate, though there can be no doubt that the land grant will be a magnificent principality if all goes well with the North-West. It would have been better if the Government could have seen its way to the purchase of a portion of the stock at a reasonable price, which would have sent the rest up and made it marketable. The "Bystander's" opinion on the main question remains the same, but a pessimizing policy is always a mistake. Rightly or wrongly the country has now embarked upon this enterprise, and there is no use in starving it or crippling those to whom its execution is entrusted, and against whose capacity and probity no charge, or shadow of a charge, has been yet made good.

IN an article on the *Provincial Subsidies*, the *Toronto Monetary Times* sets forth, with financial precision, what in effect is the table of fees paid to the several Provinces for the votes of their delegations in favour of the fresh subsidy to the Canadian Pacific Railway. Quebec, ever patriotic, demanded better terms in two forms: direct increase of her annual subsidy and the huge dole now announced by Sir Charles Tupper under the guise of re-payment of expenditure on railways. Till she had extorted both these concessions she would not vote, and it seems that the bell had rung twice before her delegation could be got into the Chamber. British Columbia exacts a settlement of her own, and a heavy one, as we know, though it does not satisfy her cravings. The rest are to receive their doles in the shape of a direct increase of the annual subsidies, and when provision has been made for the aggregate amount, the Finance Minister's surplus will be reduced to very moderate proportions. Such were the inducements to which it was found necessary to have recourse, in order to persuade the several members of the Confederation to save from ruin the grand federal enterprise, the vital bond and pledge of their future union. Potent, indeed, must be the railway which can impart national life and spirit to such a frame. What has been done on this occasion will be done at every similar crisis, and the hand of Quebec will be always held out for her black-mail till the second bell has been rung. The truth is, that Quebec is again New France; the fruits of Wolfe's victory have been lost; the British race and language are being thrust out, and the separate French interest rules the Province, both internally and in its relations with the Dominion. It is commerce, which is British or American, rather than Englishry, that holds its ground, though vastly outnumbered, in the western part of Montreal. A recent decision of the Superior Court, at Three Rivers, seems to proscribe the English language in the witness box. The Maritime Provinces, cut off from us by New France, have not learned, and it is doubtful whether they will ever learn, to regard themselves as part of Canada. This is the excuse, if not the justification, of Sir John Macdonald. The task of his political life has been to hold together a set of elements, national, religious, sectional and personal, as motley as the component patches of any "crazy quilt," and actuated, each of them, by paramount regard for its own interest. This task he has so far accomplished by his consummate address, by his assiduous study of the weaker points of character, and where corruption was indispensable, by corruption. It is more than doubtful whether anybody could have done better than he has done. His aims, if they have not been the loftiest, have always been public, and in the midst of daily temptation he has kept his own heart above pelf. Indeed, if he had not, he could scarcely have played so successfully upon the egotism and cupidity of other men. By giving the public interest the full benefit of his tact, knowledge and strategy, he has probably done the work for us as cheaply as it was possible to do it. Let it be written on his tomb, that he held out for the country against the black-mailers till the second bell had rung.

IT seems that there are a few among us at all events who are open to the suggestion that there may be something better than the party system, and are not unwilling to entertain the idea of an executive council regularly elected by the Legislature. But they call for details. There are hardly any special details to be given, except the rotation of elections. To keep up the necessary degree of harmony between the Executive and the Legislature the occurrence of vacancies ought to be so arranged that there should be one or more elections to places in the executive council every year. The union thus produced would be sufficient when the Legislature and the Executive had been set free each to do its proper work, and the Executive was no longer expected, as it is now, to control the action of the Legislature by means of a majority under its command. In other respects the process would be the same with the election of directors by any commercial company. For a time, perhaps, as was suggested before, it might be well to arrange the elections so as to admit the operation of a minority clause giving each elector, say, two votes for three