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The Acadians in Convention

The fifth convention of the French Acadians of the Maritime Provinces was held last week at Caraquet, N. B. The Convention was held under pleasant weather conditions, and it is said that as many as four thousand persons were present at some of the meetings. Among prominent men present were Hon. Mr. Lemieux, Messrs. Monk and Turgeon from Quebec; Judge Brean of Louisiana; Senator Poirier, Mgr. Richard, Hon. O. J. LeBlanc, Hon. C. H. Labillois, Hon A. D. Richard, Judge Landry, with many others of the French Acadian clergy and leading professional and business men of the Acadian stock in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and P. E. Island. The discussion of topics relating to the interests of the French Acadian people was preceded by religious services and sermons. The convention appears to have been characterized by general good feeling and hopefulness as to the future of the Acadian people. The 'Sun' considers the present position of the Acadians in an interesting article from which we quote the following:—"Of the 900,000 inhabitants of the three provinces, 140,000 are of French origin, and nearly all these are Acadians as distinguished from the descendants of the French colonists in old Canada. Though originally from the same country, and speaking the same language, the two branches of this family lived so long apart that each developed its own traditions and its own career. For a century after the conquest by England, the Acadians had not nearly the same chance for self-improvement as their relatives on the St. Lawrence. They had been scattered, many of them carried into exile, and nearly all deprived of their homes and lands, while the Canadians were confirmed in their possessions, so that their material progress and prosperity was advanced rather than retarded. It was the English who in Quebec province had to carve out new homes in the woods. This was the lot here of the Acadians, twice pioneer settlers in the provinces by the sea. The Canadians had their seminaries, their trading and industrial establishments, their ancient well tilled farms, and their ancestral abodes, when the Acadians were seeking a place to make new homes, and had not even elementary schools. The men are not yet old who remember when the Acadians had their first college classes. Previous to that time only the favored few, who were able to go to Quebec, for study, had opportunities opento Canadians. Until a recent period the Acadians who entered the ministry, or the professions of law and medicine, were few and far between, and had to overcome many difficulties. Now they are fairly well represented in all the professions as well as in the teaching craft. In the industrial and commercial life of the country they have come to take their share, and in this province they are well represented in the political activities of the community. Take it altogether it seems to us that during the last fifty years, and especially during the last twenty-five, the Acadians have more than held their own with their brethren in Quebec. This seems to be shown in the neutral ground of New England cities where the two branches of the French race on this continent meet in friendly rivalry on fairly equal terms. There is no intention here to make invidious comparisons. None are more gratified than the French speaking people in Quebec to know how far the Acadians have overcome those obstacles from which they themselves were happily free. To their sympathy and help at the time of the beginning of advanced educational work, much of the Acadian progress is due. From the seminaries and other schools of Quebec came the promoters of the colleges at Memramcook and in Western Nova Scotia, and much of the culture which will be exhibited at Caraquet in these days of discussion is the result of their labors."

Salaries and Pensions.

The Montreal 'Witness' concludes an article on Salaries and Pensions as follows: "Unfortunately, with such added financial rewards, politics is liable to be more of a game than ever. What hard cash temptations there will be to get into parliament and to stay there by hook or by crook; and what, to many politicians, irresistible temptation there will be to hang on to office for five years, no matter what the consequence to the country or the right or wrong of the matter! There is also reason to fear that less than ever, in the future, shall we find that elections are won by prayers. This must be the 'next year' predicted by Mr. Tarte, which, he said, would be such an eye-opener for the country to see. Mr. Tarte did not happen to be in the government to see; but he can now see $3,500 a year outside. Whatever comes of it, it leads away from the ideal of Benjamin Franklin. A century and a quarter ago, when England was as corrupt as the United States is today, Richard Price, the philosopher, seeking a remedy for the disease, discussed the matter with other famous men of the time, often and at great length. Price had an idea that legislation could be passed which would effect the purification of public life, but Franklin was of opinion that the true cure was only to be found in rendering all places, as offices, unprofitable, and the King too poor to give bribes and pensions. 'Till this is done,' he declared, 'your nation 'will always be plundered and obliged to pay by tax-'es the plunderers for plundering and ruining.' What Franklin would have said with the vast added parliamentary experience of another century we can only surmise. The extra indemnity to members of parliament and senators, the pensions payable, the additional salary of the Prime Minister and the salary of the leader of the Opposition come together to the considerable figure of $344,000 a year, which is the interest at three percent on about eleven and a half million dollars."

Reduced Grain Rates.

An order has been issued by the Railway Commission requiring the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways to make a general reduction in rates from Ontario points to Montreal on grain and grain products for exporting. Mr. C. B. Watts, Secretary of the Dominion Millers' Association, is reported as saying in reference to the subject: "The order partly grants what the Millers' Association was asking for. The association contended that Ontario was entitled to lower rates to the seaboard than points in Michigan and the western States on account of the short haul. This has now been recognized by the RailwayCommission, and they have ordered that in future there shall be new groupings in Ontario, based apparently on mileage, combined with the relation of the nearness of the points to the main line; that is to say, the points on branch lines remote from the main avenues of traffic will take higher percentages than the same distance would on the main line. At the time we presented the case to the commission the rates from Toledo, Detroit, and similar points were 78 per cent, of the Chicago-New York rate, and still are the same, but under this new ruling the Toronto group rate, extending as far west as Waterloo, will only be 70 per cent. The benefit of this reduction will accrue to the farmers as much as to the millers, or more so, as it will enable the millers and grain dealers to pay a higher price for the grain. Montreal will also benefit by this order as traffic which formerly went via New York or other United States seaboard ports, can now be more advantageously shipped via Montreal on account of the lower rates to that port."

Electric Storms in Ontario.

Ontario has been visited of late by some very severe electric storms, resulting in the destruction of considerable property, principally barns and their contents—and also the death of several persons. A remrkable instance of the destructive power of the electric fluid is reported from Guelph. Mr. William Hood, a farmer of Guelph township about four miles from the city, had a very narrow escape from being killed by lightning between 2 and 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon. He was cutting a field of oats with three horses. A thunder storm seemed brewing and he drove the horses to an outbuilding near by. He had one-half of the doors open and was about to open the other, when the whole building seemed to be enveloped with flames, followed by a deafening thunderclap. He was almost thrown on his knees. This was followed by two other shocks in an instant, Mr. Hood feeling each shock. The first bolt seemed to him like a piece of red hot iron two inches square. The centre horse dropped suddenly on top of the binder tongue, and the nigh one on top of him, while the third seemed to be all right. Mr. Hood, dizzy, went to release the horse, but before he could do so a flash like a silver line ran up between her ears, and she fell dead. Strange to say, the only other damage done was to the whip. Half of it was taken off in one place and the other half about 18 inches lower.

The Peace Conference

The peace commissioners at Portsmouth appear to have gone as far as they are able or authorized to go in negotiating terms, and they have not yet been able to find ground which both parties are willing to accept as a basis of peace. Of the twelve clauses in which the demands of Japan are said to be embodied, it is reported that the Russian envoys have declared their willingness to accept seven, and another clause is said to be acceptable in principle, though there may be some question as to details. The demands to which the Russian envoys refuse to accede are understood to be, the surrender of Sakhalin Island to Japan; the surrender to the Japanese of all Russian warships interned in neutral ports; the limitation of Russia's naval strength in the Far East, and the recognition by Russia of the principle that Japan is entitled to remuneration for the cost of the war. The cession of Sakhalin and the matter of indemnity of course constitute the main obstacle to peace. The Japanese envoys remain firm in their demands on these points, and the Russians as firmly decline to reconsider their refusal. It is not, however, certain that the resources of diplomacy have been exhausted in the effort to secure peace. President Roosevelt will not, we may be sure, allow the Conference to end in failure without doing all he can to make it a success, and it is understood that he is laboring strenuously with the ambassadors to that end. Other nations too—Britain, France, Germany—are reported to be using their best efforts in favor of peace. It is intimated that the belligerent nations may be persuaded, for the sake of concluding the bloody and costly strife, to agree upon some mutual concessions or to submit to arbitration the questions upon which peace or the continuance of the war depends. This may be too much to hope for, and yet it seems at least possible that when the envoys meet again on Tuesday, it will not be to conclude a futile conference but to consider suggestion which may lead to peace.

There has been an outbreak of fanaticism lately among the Yorkton Doukhobors. A number of them started on a pilgrimage, seeking the Messiah and acting in an insane manner. They appear to be giving the N. W. Mounted Police considerable trouble, and sixteen of them are reported to have been committed as insane at Yorkton. There is said to be some reason to believe that the Government may permit individual Doukhobors to homestead on their own account. Heretofore they have been farming as communities, but now and again individual Doukhobors have expressed the desire to make their own homestead entries. This desire for individual freedom has been checked by the Doukhobor community, but it is believed that if Doukhobors are encouraged by Government to make individual homestead entries, it would result in many breaking away from the community life and becoming more rapidly Canadianized.

According to despatches reported to have been received at Washington, the boycott of American goods in China is not assuming serious dimensions. It is admitted that the boycott is quite effective at Shanghai and to a less degree at Canton, but at other points it has had little effect. From Montreal, however, it is reported the C. P. R. officials are in receipt of information from China, showing that the boycott of American goods is making itself felt there in a very marked manner and that it is resulting to the advantage of Canada. Inquiries, it is said, are being made in China about Canadian flour, and shipments from the United States are falling off because of the boycott.

Two agents of the Japanese Government were in Montreal last week. They are reported to have purchased a herd of Canadian cattle, consisting of about 40 head of Ayreshires, Shorthorns, Devons and Holsteins for shipment to Japan. This will be the first shipment of Canadian cattle to Japan. It will go by the way of the C. P. R. steamer 'Ottoman' from Vancouver on September 18.