

The Canadian Spectator.

VOL. I., NO. 2.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 1878.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM

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CANADIAN AFFAIRS.

The Hon. Peter Mitchell is a victim of recent legislation and circumstance with regard to contracts and government. He has to resign, it is rumoured, and in seeking re-election will have to dissolve a snowball. The Hon. gentleman's friends are speaking well of him. The Hon. gentleman can talk. If he only talk with the ordinary heat of an election speech in Canada, his opponent will certainly melt.

Mr. Moffat proposes to resign himself to private life, so say latest rumours, and Mr. Haddow has offered to sacrifice himself to the interests of the electors of Restigouche. The Liberal papers speak well of him. We wait to hear from the Conservative papers what crimes he has committed or is likely to commit.

At the Montreal Board of Trade meeting the retiring President, Mr. Andrew Robertson, dealt in an able and practical manner with the question of insolvency and the reasons for the numerous increase of insolvents during the past three years. He said it was owing in part to a clause in the insolvency law, which is to the effect that no insolvent can obtain, nor can a judge grant, a discharge to an insolvent unless the estate pays fifty cents on the dollar, or that the insolvent can prove that it was through the negligence or mismanagement of the assignee that the amount was not paid. Mr. Robertson went nearer to the root of things when, after quoting figures, he exclaimed "Yes, gentlemen, let us acknowledge that as a country we have out-traded, and our sin has found us out. We have imported beyond the legitimate wants of the country," &c. It is well that our commercial leaders are awake and penitent.

The Toronto *Globe* of Tuesday says it is not true that the present Ministry at Ottawa has no policy but abuse of Sir John Macdonald, and invites with pride "both friends and foes to look around and investigate the work done, and the questions satisfactorily disposed of. There is not a single quarter in the wide Dominion where there is any difficulty of an interprovincial character, or between any of the Provinces and the Dominion Government." That is pretty tall even for party talk, especially in the eyes and ears of those who are acquainted with the state of things in the Province of Quebec. Will the editor read again the speech of M. Tarte at the opening of the Quebec Legislature, and remember that the speech was in no way repudiated by the Provincial Cabinet.

THE WAR.

The war in the East drags its weary way along, and the end is not yet in sight. Every day rumours are started and contradicted as to peace prospects and mediation.

Speaking of England's recent communication and of the negotiations respecting peace conditions, the *Journal de St. Petersburg* observes that Russia recognizes the right of Europe to make known its appreciation of the peace conditions settled between the belligerents. The utmost secrecy is observed by Russia regarding her terms of peace, not even the Commander-in-Chief, it is said, being in possession of the full conditions. It seems to be admitted, both in London and at St. Petersburg, that the probabilities of an armistice are on the decrease, though the Porte has informed England of its readiness to enter into negotiations with Russia, but has intimated that it did not think that negotiations between the commanders, as proposed by Russia, were suitable, and suggested communications through special plenipotentiaries. There are, however, difficulties in the way of the successful adoption of this scheme. According to a Vienna special, England has informed Russia that while she has no objections to the conclusion of an armistice in the manner proposed by Russia, she cannot allow a new European pro-

gramme to be drawn up without her sanction. It is also reported on a Russian authority that, Austria and Germany having declared against opening the Dardanelles to Russian vessels only, Russia has decided not to open the question.

Since writing the above we learn that an armistice has been agreed upon, between the belligerent armies. That is the first step to peace. If Europe can agree as to the terms of treaty, we may look for the end of this disastrous war and a permanent settlement of the Eastern question. To that end Europe must insist upon internal reforms in the administration of Turkish affairs, and the independence of the Christian Provinces. Anything less than that will only postpone the difficulty, and make another war inevitable. The wisdom of the English Cabinet will now be laid under contribution.

The Ministerial crisis which was threatened at Constantinople has been averted, and all the Ministers retain their portfolios. Preparations are being made to resist the Russian advance south of the Balkans, although the report of Radetzky's passage of the Shipka Pass is contradicted by a telegram from the spot stating that the weather had become exceedingly mild, and that a two hours' cannonade had been exchanged with the enemy. Raouf Pasha, Minister of War, holds the supreme command in Roumelia, with Suleiman and Baker Pashas under him; the former in command of an army corps, and the latter of a division.

Much uncertainty exists as to the ultimate attitude of Greece, as the Government are awaiting the meeting of the British Parliament before taking any decisive step one way or another. So long, however, as the present Hellenic Ministry remains in power there is little probability of the definite adoption of a warlike policy. The calling out of the second class of the reserves has increased the *effectif* of the Greek army to 35,000 men.

AFFAIRS IN ENGLAND.

On the 17th of this month the two Houses of Parliament will meet for the despatch of business. Rarely have they met under more grave and exciting circumstances. Many questions will rise and demand a settlement—explanations will be asked and counsel sought. The present Government have been singularly and persistently unfortunate. Lord Beaconsfield may be held to be as thoroughly "on the side of the angels" as ever was Mr. Disraeli—but they seem not to have helped him much. They may have inspired speeches—but appear to have deserted him when he has applied himself to Parliamentary action. Few Governments have been so misunderstood—for the simple reason that few governments, if any, have so laid themselves open to misunderstanding. They have done certain things to which, in the ordinary way, this or that particular significance would be attached, but in the end it has been found that ordinary rules would not apply, and the world has blundered. On the eve of the Eastern War the fleet was sent to Besika Bay, which all the world and the Turks construed into an attitude of menace toward Russia. It was so quoted in the Houses themselves by members who supported the Ministry, and then it was found that the Ministry meant nothing of that sort. Other examples might be quoted, but it is needless. And now that the Legislature is to meet nearly three weeks before the usual time, it would be only fair to presume that something of extreme importance is on the tapis. But who can tell? Who can ever predict? The Earl of Beaconsfield is not to be judged by ordinary standards. In the commonplace way the conclusion would be that the Ministers of the Crown have taken a great and decisive step, and will ask Parliament to support that step by voting the required supplies. But, probably, it will be found that no such step has been taken, and Parliament has been summoned to tell the Ministers what they ought to do. For this is a pliable and deferential Cabinet. From the first it has had no policy but that of waiting, and no object but that of keeping office. Long ago it would have declared war—but remained neutral in obedience to popular opinion.

All have come to the conclusion that something must be done, and the Government are anxious to know what that something is. It will probably be found that Her Majesty's Ministers have no definite communication to make, and no definite policy to propose. And that will be a misfortune. "Dignified neutrality" sounds well, but lacks the practical element. There is the usual talk about British interests, and it may be that they are defined in the minds of Her Majesty's Ministers.