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POOR DOCUMENT

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JOHN A. JOWES, Editor and Publisher

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY FEB. 13, 1890.

For the Latest Telegraphic News look on the First Page.

THE FRENCH PROBLEM.

When the Province of Manitoba was created and arrangements made for the government of our Canadian North West there is no doubt that it was the aim of the French members of the House of Commons to so direct matters that Manitoba and the North West would become new Quebecs and that French influence would be the dominating one in that part of Canada. It was to secure this end that the use of French as an official language and the separate school system were fastened on Manitoba and the North West, and the French repatriation scheme for the purpose of removing French Canadians from the United States to Manitoba was a part of the same design. This hopeful plan failed because nature was too strong for the French. The Quebec French who had gone to the United States had no disposition to return and become farmers in Manitoba; the French in Quebec were not sufficiently enterprising to go to the North West and begin life anew under conditions to which they had not been accustomed. Thus it came about that while the French speaking people of the North West fifteen years ago were a full half of the population they now form an insignificant minority.

The bill to abolish the dual language system in the North-West, which Mr. Dalton McCarthy has introduced, and which was discussed last evening in the House of Commons, is intended to relieve the territories of an incubus, which it is neither necessary nor proper they should bear. The amendment of Mr. Davitt to refer the matter to the legislature of the North-West territories is only a round about way of accomplishing the same result. It is, of course, a difficult question for both political parties for the French are touchy to the last degree, and are always lustily shouting that their nationality must be preserved, but, nevertheless, it is a question that must be faced. The demand of certain French Conservatives that the government shall oppose the referring of the matter to the North-West legislature or to the people of the territories is an unreasonable one and certainly should not be granted. It might please the French for a moment until some new whim seized them, but it would mortally offend the English-speaking settlers, who ought to have something to say in regard to a question of such importance. The process of making Canada a French preserve must be checked, and the French people must be plainly given to understand that while Quebec may be a French province the rest of Canada is British.

IMPROVED METHODS OF FISHING.

The report of the commissioners appointed by the Dominion government to inquire into the herring fisheries of Great Britain and Holland, with a view to the introduction of better methods of fishing into Canada, which has just been presented to Parliament, is a document of great value, and full of important suggestions. The two gentlemen who were selected for this work, seem to have accomplished their task in a very thorough manner, and we have no doubt that in the end the money expended in sending them abroad will be repaid to Canada one hundred fold. The report itself is very lengthy and not likely to be read except by persons in the fishing business, but a summary of it will be acceptable to the majority of our readers. The commissioners, in the beginning of their report lay down the general proposition that no real permanent improvement can take place, nor can the herring industry in Canada be placed upon a satisfactory commercial basis until the fisherman ceases to be his own fish curer, and until the business of curing is taken in hand by a class of merchant fish curers, as in Scotland—men of energy, business experience and capital—with all the necessary appliances to carry on the business on fixed principles and in accordance with such regulations as may be promulgated for the benefit of the trade from time to time. They recommend that there should be a chief fishery officer, inspector or superintendent, having jurisdiction, under the department, over all matters of detail pertaining to the herring fishing industry in all the Maritime Provinces, whose business it should be, in association with one or more of the most experienced and most intelligent officers in each province, to arrange a general classification of herring and a graded branding standard, as well as an unbrandable grade for the Dominion, having due regard to any special kind of herring peculiar to any one province or locality, the object being to secure as nearly as possible a general Dominion standard on the same lines as the graded standard of Scotland, as nearly as circumstances will permit. They think there should be imported and established in each sea board county, where the importance of the herring fishing may so warrant, a thoroughly trained Scotch herring cooper, of long experience in the herring-curing business, who should act as head inspector for his district. That there should be imported from Scotland, for each fishing county, one crew of expert herring-gutting girls, whose business it should be to go from station to station teaching all concerned, willing to learn, the art of gutting, selecting, classifying, curing and packing herrings and refilling barrels preparatory to inspection, as practised in Scotland. They urge that the present Canadian barrel, being too weak to stand the rough handling to which it is exposed on the railways in transportation, should be greatly improved; that it should continue of the present size and contain not less than 200 lbs. of herrings, exclusive of salt; that it should be made of stronger material; that the staves should be of hardwood wherever possible; and that, if spruce is permitted to be used, the stave should be thicker and stronger than the present stave. Fir and pine should be prohibited. In addition to the barrel and half barrel they recommend that there should be established a grade of small packages in which to put up repacked herrings after the manner of the Dutch and Germans; that these packages or kegs should be integral parts of the large barrels, say one-fourth, one-eighth and one-tenth parts of the full-sized barrels. They also urge improved methods for curing both as regards, salt, pickled, kippered and smoked herrings and they predict that if these suggestions are adopted there will be a great increase in the demand for Canadian fish. The conclusions arrived at by the Commissioners appear to be sound and no doubt will meet with the favorable consideration of Parliament.

THE COPYRIGHT QUESTION.

The Dominion Parliament, at its last session, as our readers will remember, passed a copyright act which gave Canadian publishers the right to republish English copyright works on the payment to the author of a sum based on the selling value of the work. This act was intended to remedy the existing state of affairs which enables American editions of British works to enter Canada on payment of a small duty and deprives Canadian publishers of all chance to compete with them, in the majority of cases. The Canadian copyright act was, however, witheld for the approval of her Majesty and it has been vigorously opposed by an association of British publishers who call themselves the English Copyright Association, and also by the Musical Copyright Association. These two associations have united their forces and presented a memorial to the British government against the Canadian copyright law. This memorial says that the Canadian Act is not only ultra vires but highly injurious to all British copyright owners except those resident in the Dominion, and the two associations therefore ask the imperial authorities to withhold the royal assent to the Act. The opinion is quoted of Lords Selbourne and Herschell given in 1871, in which they state that the Imperial Copyright Act of 1842 is still in force in its integrity throughout the British dominions, including Canada, in so far as it prohibits the printing in any part of such dominions of a book copyrighted under that Act without the consent of the proprietor. The petitioners contend that the proposed royalty provided for in the Canadian Act is illusory, because it will be unworkable. They say it is not intended to encourage cheap literature, and is not required in the interests of the publishers of Canada who can make their own arrangements with the author. The Act is particularly objected to on the ground that under it there is nothing to prevent a Canadian edition from entering the United Kingdom and competing with the author's copyright.

To this memorial Sir John Thompson has made a very lengthy and elaborate reply which occupies three columns of the Toronto Empire. He states that the statute was not designed to come into force without the concurrence of the Imperial Government, because it deals with a subject in which Imperial legislation extending to all her Majesty's possessions exists, and in respect of which it is not desirable that a measure should be adopted conflicting with the Imperial policy, except in so far as important Canadian interests may require, and until due notice has been given. The copyright system now in force, he says, has been found to be most unsuitable to Canada, while the Berne convention increases the causes of complaint. Under the existing law United States publishers have taken possession of British works and sent them into the Cannadian market, while the Canadian publishers have been refused the right to republish. The right of reprinting for Canadian readers is thus thrown into the hands of Americans. The legislation of last year preserves to persons holding copyrights in England the right to publish in Canada within a certain time. If he fails to publish, his copyright shall still avail him to the extent of enabling him to collect a royalty on all reprints. The royalty provision is, Sir John Thompson claims, quite reasonable, affording full facilities for collection. The Government would be ready to submit to the Imperial authorities regulations which may be adopted for collecting these royalties The royalties he submits could be more readily collected than is the tax imposed for the benefit of British authors upon reprints of their works in the United States. Sir John Thompson then combats the theory that Canada cannot legislate under her constitution on copyright questions. He says that if the British North America Act has not conferred authority to legislate on this question it is delusive, for the Canadian people have always considered that it gave such power. Besides, if the Parliament of Canada cannot legislate on this question, it cannot legislate on any other question, when its law is repugnant to any British legislation on the subject. The reasoning in this reply appears to be conclusive against the claims set up by the British publishers, and should prevail at the colonial office. We can only say that the refusal of the Royal assent to this law would produce a very bad impression in Canada.

NOTE AND COMMENT.

It is pleasing to have the assurance of Sir John A. Macdonald that negotiations for the settlement of the difficulty with regard to Behring Sea are proceeding in a satisfactory manner. The only settlement of this question which will suit the people of Canada will be one involving an entire abandonment by the United States of their absurd claims to Behring Sea.

Our esteemed contemporary, the Acadian Recorder, is in great need of instruction in regard to political matters in New Brunswick. Referring to the recent election in this Province it says:

Over the New Brunswick position, the boodle Tories are just frantic. Mr. Blair has fully two-thirds of the new House. Three of the Northumberland representatives—Messrs. Tweedie, Robinson and O'Brien—will support the administration, (of which in fact Mr. Tweedie has become a member.) The Tory press showed its hand too soon. It gloated over what it called "a Liberal defeat" in New Brunswick, and now it finds that it was a great Liberal victory. New Brunswick and P. E. Island have spoken—both have pronounced against the boodlers. All the governments of all the Provinces will in a few months be under Liberal rule.

Whom does the Recorder call "a boodle Tory?" Is Mr. W. H. Thorne to be thus designated by a Halifax Annexationist sheet? Heaven forbid. We beg most respectfully to inform the Recorder that the New Brunswick government is not Liberal but Conservative, all the departmental offices except the Attorney Generalship being filled with good men and true, who vote for the government of Sir John A. Macdonald. Moreover the leaders of the opposition to our government Messrs. Gregory, Stockton and Alward are violent Grits.

It is said that the Nova Scotia Central Railway is to be extended to Margaretville on the Bay of Fundy. Unfortunately Margaretville has no sufficient harbor and cannot be approached except in fine weather. It would take a very large expenditure to make Margaretville available in all weathers and even then it would only be a tidal harbor, dry at low water.

Who would have believed the day would ever come when a bill would be introduced in the United States Senate rendering it impossible for a European emigrant to come to America except by permission of his own government, thus destroying the right of Asylum for political offenders! Yet such is the case. This bill provides that every foreign subject going to the United States shall obtain the permission of and be identified by his own government. Such permission and identification shall be evidenced by a certificate in the English language by the government of which the immigrant is a subject. It will also contain the name and description of the person with his or her signature. Also the family or tribal name, title, rank, sex, age, height and all physical peculiarities; former and present occupation, etc. The bill further provides that the certificate shall be vised by the diplomatic or consular representative of the United States at the place from which the intending immigrant is about to depart. Should this bill become law it would render all extradition treaties unnecessary.

CAPITAL.

The Work of Parliament Yesterday.

OTTAWA, Feb. 12—In the commons, today, Mr. Wallace introduced a bill to suppress trade combines.

Replying to Hon. Mr. Laurier, Sir John Macdonald said the total expenditure upon the Harvey and Salisbury railway surveys under the governor general's warrant was $13,782.

Mr. Charlton, on motion to adjourn, brought up the question of the riot in Hull last night. He said that if no murder was committed it was not the fault of the rioters. The measures adopted by the civic authorities to preserve peace were insufficient. Freedom of speech had been denied, and such a spirit should be rebuked and suppressed. The government should guarantee citizens their freedom.

Sir John charged Mr. Charlton with endeavoring to arouse passions and prejudices. The administration of the law rested with the local authorities and all parliament could do was to express its disapprobation. If the riot had assumed proportions of a rebellion the military might be called out. Mr. Charlton was doing no good in bringing the matter up here.

Mr. Charlton tried to reply, but was called to order.

Hon. Mr. Laurier said the premier had made charges against Mr. Charlton to which the latter should have the right to reply.

Mr. Charlton said Sir John had no right to impute motives to, or cast reflections upon, him. The premier's speech was calculated to encourage lawlessness.

Mr. Blake, who was received with cheers, said parliament ought not to interfere in cases where it had no right to do so. The Quebec legislature could deal with the matter, and the prospects of liberty were not brightened but darkened when an authority which had no right to interfere with the administration of law sought to do so.

Mr. Flynn deprecated the manner in which the matter had been brought up. The outrage in Hull was no more serious than others to which no reference had been made. Nothing had been said about the assault upon Archbishop Walsh by a Toronto mob.

The matter then dropped.

In answer to Mills, Sir John Macdonald said the government had no intimation that the United States government were about to grant a further lease of Behring sea fisheries with provisions for the exclusion of Canadian fishermen. Negotiations for the settlement of the dispute were progressing satisfactorily.

A resolution by Landerkin, asking that the farmers be allowed a rebate of duty paid on corn for, feeding cattle for export, was declared lost on a division.

After recess bills respecting the St. Stephen Bank and Peoples' Bank of New Brunswick were read a third time. Amongst the bills read a second time were these: Respecting the New Brunswick railway company, to incorporate the Shore Line railway company, and to incorporate the Moncton and P. E. I. railway and ferry company.

Mr. Flynn, in moving for papers relating to the claim of the district of St. Peter's against the government in Richmond county for medical attendance upon sick mariners, said the minister of marine stated that sick mariners were only entitled to relief when taken sick at the port where there was a marine hospital. He quoted the law showing that the minister's interpretation of the law was incorrect. If seamen belonged to a vessel that paid into the sick mariners' fund at any port he was entitled to aid. If men were only to be looked after at ports where there were hospitals then the fund was only for the benefit of a certain number of sick seamen and practically useless as there were only 14 marine hospitals in all the maritime provinces.

Hon. Mr. Tupper contended that his interpretation of the law was correct.

Messrs. Weldon and Davies upheld Mr. Flynn's view and argued that the minister should carry out what was clearly the intention of parliament.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell said it was absurd to say that because a seaman was injured at a port where there was no marine hospital there should be no relief from the sick mariners' fund. The spirit of the act should be adhered to.

After recess, Mr. McCarthy moved the second reading of the bill to abolish the French language in the Northwest.

Mr. Davin moved an amendment that the Northwest assembly be empowered to deal with the question after the next election for that body. He charged that Mr. McCarthy had found he could make nothing out of the anti Jesuit agitation and so had taken up a crusade against the French language. The question of dual language in the Northwest was a local one, and should be dealt with by the local legislature. The fact that the French were in the minority in the Northwest was the reason why their rights should not be taken away without hearing them. He combatted Mr. McCarthy's contention that Canada could not become a nation while two languages were tolerated by reference to Switzerland, Austria and other European countries.

Mr. O'Brien quoted resolutions of the Northwest assembly and utterances of newspapers to prove the people of the territories desired the dual language abolished.

White (Cardwell) supported the amendment and declared that this anti-French motion arose out of a desire to make political capital by fanning the flames raised by the Jesuits' Estates agitation.

Beausoliel spoke in French and moved an amendment to the amendment declaring it inadvisable to interfere with the Northwest act, as such interference would put in doubt the stability of our institutions and check immigration.

Denison supported the bill, of which he is seconder, and said the language question should be settled by the Dominion now and not left to be settled by foreigners who may hereafter migrate to the Northwest.

Mr. Mulock moved the adjournment of the debate, which will be resumed tomorrow.

The house rose at 11 o'clock.

A deputation of six French conservative members waited upon Sir John Macdonald this morning asking what the government's intention was in regard to the dual language bill of Mr. McCarthy. The French-Canadian conservatives are said to be against the dual language question being referred to the Northwest council and insist on the government dealing with it.

A deputation of bankers again met Hon. Mr. Foster this morning. The interview was strictly private. The draft of the proposed changes of the existing Banking act was laid before the deputation and the different clauses carefully gone over, leading to considerable discussion and argument. On the whole it is understood the delegates are satisfied with the situation. After leaving Mr. Foster the bankers met and appointed a sub-committee to meet Mr. Courtney, the deputy minister, which they did this afternoon for the purpose of drafting their proposed amendments.

A deputation of Manitoba millers will meet Sir John to-morrow afternoon by appointment. They want the wheat duty left as it is and that on flour raised seventy-five cents, instead of one dollar as demanded by the Ontario millers.

Dr. Weldon (Albert) arrived and took his seat for the first time to-day. Mr. Wilmot also returned from attending his mother's funeral.

A deputation from the geological survey interviewed the minister of the interior this morning in regard to the proposed bill dealing with the department, and pointed out that the proposed act on one hand would render the dominion land surveyors ineligible for employment in a geological survey, while it proposed, on the other hand, to charge the survey with the making of topographical and geographical surveys. A sub-committee consisting of Wood (Westmorland), Jones (Digby) and others handed in a report to Mr. Dewdney recommending several amendments to the act.

Wilkie Collins About Charles Dickens.

"Dickens," from a marked copy of Forster's.

[Pall Mall Budget.]

There was an idea, but it turned out a forlorn hope, that Wilkie Collins would have written a book about Dickens. The materials were his own. His very close relations with Dickens gave him opportunities that came to no other man, and he could have told the story well. This cannot be doubted if a look is taken at the pencil and pen memoranda that are to be found in his copy of Forster's "Life"—the three-volume edition of 1872—which was sold on Monday. His estimates of some of Dickens stories are terse, direct, and vigorous. The first is on the first page. It is an emendation. "Charles Dickens, the most popular novelist of the century," says Forster. Wilkie Collins qualifies this statement by adding the words "after Walter Scott." At page 125, vol. I., discussing "Oliver Twist," Mr. Forster remarks, "Here was the interest of a story simply but well constructed." Nonsense," writes Wilkie Collins, "the one defect in that wonderful book is the helplessly bad construction of the story. The character of 'Nancy' is the finest thing he ever did. He never afterwards saw all sides of a woman's charcter—saw all round her. That the same man who could create 'Nancy' created the second Mrs. Dombey is the most imcomprehensible anomaly that I know of in literature." [Dickens himself—the brackets are mine—said of Nancy's story: "It is true."]

THE PLOT OF "BARNABY RUDGE."

The next note will be found on page 217, and relates to "Barnaby Rudge." Dickens, it appears, had a very original idea for working out the plot differently from the way in which it now stands. But he was persuaded out of it by Forster, who thought it weak. Concerning this Wilkie Collins writes, "Where is the unsoundness of it? I call it a fine idea New, powerful, highly dramatic, and well within the limits of truth to nature. It would have greatly improved the weakest book that Dickens ever wrote."

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT AND DOMBEY AND SON.

In volume II., page 21, the words "waterfall at 'St. Wighton'" are made to read "St. Nighton," and on page 151 that the favorite of Napoleon was not "Mdme St. George," but "Mdlle. Georges." At page 372 is the following remark by Mr. Wilkie Collins. "Here and there I hope to add a few notes to the Biography." At page 417 Dickens says, "'Chuzzlewit,' with its small sale, sent me up. 'Dombey's' large sale has tumbled me down." In answer to which Mr. Wilkie Collins argues: "That 'Chuzzlewit' (in some respects the finest novel he ever wrote) delighted his readers, and so led to a large sale of the next book, 'Dombey,' I don't doubt. But the latter half of 'Dombey' no intelligent person can have read without astonishment at the badness of it, and the disappointment that followed lowered the sale of the next book, 'Copperfield,' incomparably superior to 'Dombey' as it certainly is."

HARALD SKIMPOLE.

The Leigh Hunt incident in regard to the character of Harold Skimpole in "Bleak House" is spoken of on page 7, vol. III. Mr. Wilkie Collins, for the first time using ink for his notes—till now they have been written in pencil—makes this statement:—"At Dickens own house, when Leigh Hunt was one of his guests at dinner on that occasion, Hunt directly charged Dickens with taking the character of Harold Skimpole from the character of Leigh Hunt, and protested strongly. I was not present, but Dickens told me what had happened."

BRITISH CLAPTRAP.

That Mr. Wilkie Collins was a realist creeps out in his remarks in a passage on page 349:—"There is scarcely a page of the thousands he has written which might not be put into the hand of a child," remarks Dickens's biographer. This raises Mr. Wilkie Collins's ire. He says:—"It is impossible to read such stuff as this without a word of protest. If it is true, which it is not, it would imply the condemnation of Dickens books as work of art, it would declare him to be guilty of deliberately presenting to his readers a false reflection of human life. If this wretched English claptrap means anything it means that the novelist is forbidden to touch on the sexual relations which literally swarm about him, and influence the lives of millions of his fellow creatures [except] those relations are licensed by [the word marriage has been run through, and in its place is written] the ceremony called marriage. One expects this essentially immoral view of the functions of the novelist from a professor of claptrap like the late Bishop of Manchester. But that Forster should quote it with approval is a sad discovery indeed."

HE MELANCHOLY WORK OF A WORN-OUT BRAIN.

On page 428 Mr. Forster compares the description in "Edwin Drood" with the dialogue in "Oliver Twist." On which Mr. Wilkie Collins remarks; "He would have pointed out the contrast more fairly if he had compared dialogue with dialogue or description with description in both cases. A novelist knows what Forster did not know—that dialogue is more easily written than description. To my mind it was cruel to compare Dickens in the radiant prime of his genius with Dickens last labored effort, the melancholy work of a worn out brain."

DICKENS AND FORSTER.

On page 442 there is a personal Note. Mr. Forster says: "Personal characteristics unbroken continuity of kindly impulse." Mr. Wilkie Collins writes: "The kindly impulse' did unquestionably exist but not in 'unbroken continuity.' More than once there were fierce quarrels between Dickens and Forster (sometimes at Forster's own table), which took place in my presence. Dickens sense of what he owed to Forster's devotion—rightly and properly a strong sense—was often subjected to severe trial by Forster himself. The assertion (quite sincerely made) that no letters addressed by Dickens to other old friends revealed his character so frankly and completely as his letters to Forster, it is not necessary to contradict. Dickens letters published by his sister-in-law and his eldest daughter may be left to settle that question."

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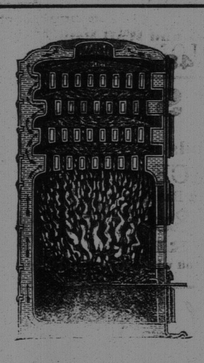

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