

THE CRITIC.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Some form of "Home Rule" is almost certain to be conceded to Ireland by the next British Parliament.

Mr. Bright, speaking at Birmingham last week, said that in his opinion the days of landlord influence and landlord oppression will soon pass away forever. He himself desires a redistribution of land, abolition of the game laws, and a re adjustment of the present system of taxation.

It is to be hoped that our present Local Government will not go to the country without effecting a radical change in the assessment law. A wise and equitable plan of assessment is needed and desired by the country, and may be made a strong plank in the Local Government's election platform.

The French people are distressed over the lack of proper coast and harbor defences. They now propose spending \$25,000,000 in coast and harbor fortifications. This is a large sum to expend in order to keep neighbors from trespassing; if the French policy were less bellicose, the money might have been devoted to more remunerative public works.

It is estimated that the annual catch of fish in Europe and North America is equal in weight to that of 42,000,000 sheep. The harvests of the sea are gathered by upwards of 600,000 men, and are calculated to aggregate in weight 1,500,000 tons. The great cosmopolitan industry employs a fleet of 160,000 fishing vessels.

The Provincial Government has wisely appointed a commission to obtain statistical and general information so as to enable the Legislature to deal intelligently with a revision of the assessment law. The agricultural, mining and fishing interests are well represented in the commission; not so the manufacturing interests, which appear to have been overlooked. The following gentlemen constitute the new board: Mr. Israel Longworth of Truro, Chairman; Mr. Richard H. Brown of Sydney Mines, C., B., Mr. Thomas T. Keefer of Bridgewater, and Mr. John L. Brown of Wolfville.

At the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, to be held in London next May, it is proposed to exhibit specimens of the work done in Canadian schools. Mr. Ouimet, Superintendent of Education for Quebec, has issued circulars to the teachers of that Province, asking for: A photographic view of the school building; anything peculiar to the institution in the way of school-books and apparatus, specimens of the daily exercises of the pupils in writing, drawing, arithmetic, needle-work, tapestry, &c. We understand that our Superintendent purposes taking steps to have the Nova Scotian schools represented also.

Visitors to Cape Breton County speak of the coal fields of the Island as being exclusively in the vicinity of Sydney. If Inverness had the railway to which its population and capabilities entitle it, the coal mines of Broad Cove and Chimney Corner would be as well known as are now those in Cape Breton County. But Inverness County must have, *shall have* justice. One of the finest agricultural counties in the Province has too long been kept in the background by being deprived of the boon of railway communication.

How long is the Island of Cape Breton, to which the treasury of this Province owes so much, to be treated as if it were an incubus to the Province? Young Cape Bretonians are even now beginning to agitate quietly for "Home Rule." They say they have waited patiently long enough for justice at the hand of the "powers that be," and have been treated almost with contempt;—"and still we wonder why don't they get Home Rule for Ireland."

Another phase of the land question in Britain is likely to be brought into prominence at the next session of the British Parliament. The estates of many landlords are already mortgaged up to their full value, and are virtually owned by London Jews and other usurers. The real question in the land problem is therefore not unlikely to become a bondholders' question, and if it should assume this form, legislation may take the shape of scaling down the usurious burdens of many estates to such an extent as to make a great reduction of rents conveniently possible.

In referring to the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the *Chicago Canadian American* says: "Canada will be pardoned if she rises up and yells when the connection is made with British Columbia. Our neighbors can boast of having the longest continuous line of railway in the world. They can confidently assert that no nation of equal population ever undertook, and carried through, such a stupendous project as the Canadian Pacific, a road that, as Col. Pat. Donan would say, presents one cheek to be kissed by the Atlantic and the other by the Pacific. Good luck to it and the people who have built it!"

A Lunenburg man wants to know why Nova Scotia does not supply Ontario with fish. It appears that Ontario last year bought fish from the United States to the value of \$350,000, and it is claimed that the greater part of the fish thus imported from across the border was first bought in Nova Scotia. The only explanation of this passing of trade into an unnatural channel lies chiefly in these two facts: Boston fish merchants send agents through Ontario every year; Nova Scotian fish dealers await the coming of orders instead of sending out men to seek them.

The *London Times* of Oct. 28th, contained a letter from a writer signing himself "B," in which the execution of Riel was urged on the following grounds:—"1st, Rebels in general, unlike other criminals, do not incur the penalty of shame, and, unless they are treated with correspondingly greater severity, the offence has an attractiveness for men of a certain type. 2nd, The reward of success in rebellion is great. Unless this inducement to rebel is counterbalanced by severe punishment in case of failure, the safety of society will be endangered. 3rd, The rebel is the direct cause of violent crime in others. 4th, Riel is a particularly mean rebel, willing to keep quiet for a consideration. 5th, It was not his first offence. 6th, The heinousness of his crime had been tacitly admitted by his friends when they thought it necessary to enter the plea of insanity. This plea had been rejected by a jury."

From an interesting and exhaustive description of Labrador, which appeared in the September and October numbers of *Harper's*, we clip the following:—"Nature's tidbit here is a rock. Geologists would have much to tell of the granites, gneiss, traps, basalts, porphyries that generally compose the coast. But the general reader needs chiefly to imagine all these rocks heaved up along the sea, in high cliffs deeply cloven, in gentler slopes, in islands often of jagged and picturesque forms, in bold headlands, in the shores of deep, narrow, shadowy bays, in the banks of winding channels; then these varied forms in some places set off by veins and strata of strong colors—snow-white, red, rich purple, brown, grey, deep green, black, the whole either bare or covered with moss; ponds of beer-colored rain-water in the hollows of the rock; a river now and then coming into the clear sea with a current of dark water; once in a great while a few trees at the mouth of a river. With these features in mind he sees Labrador."

EVENTS OF TO-DAY.

It is comparatively but a few years since the ocean cables were successfully laid—but what a wonderful revolution these agencies for the transmission of news have brought about. Epitomes of the speeches of Gladstone, Chamberlain, Salisbury and Churchill now appear in our daily papers within twenty-four hours of the time at which the speeches were delivered. A quarter of a century since, the utterances of British statesmen