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REFERRING to dissatisfaction among certain Liberals in Montserrat regarding the presence of Mr. Tarte in the Cabinet, the Montreal Witness, a good Grit paper, has this to say: "The unfortunate thing about the opposition to Mr. Tarte is that those who dread his administration most are most afraid of turning him out of it, as the head and front of the assaults upon him have not been by the incorruptible stalwarts, as mentioned, but by men whose demands for positions suggest still greater dangers to the country than any that have accrued, or are likely to accrue, from the incumbency of Mr. Tarte." It must be acknowledged that this is quite a candid admission of the reality that is bound to exist so long as a Grit Government holds power at Ottawa. Tarte is bad; but should he go worse than he shall attain positions of influence. That is bad, very!

Just at present there seems to be considerable trouble in Samoa in the Pacific Ocean. Samoa is under the joint protectorate of Great Britain, Germany and the United States, in accordance with the terms of the Berlin treaty of 1889. There are a number of petty chiefs, over whom there is a King. The Government is by the British, German and American Consuls residing at Apia, the chief city and port. The Chief Justice is appointed by the three protecting powers, and it is a part of his duty to determine the succession to the throne when a vacancy occurs. Such a vacancy recently took place and there were two claimants for the throne. A considerable number of the natives refused to submit to the authority of the newly appointed King and espoused the cause of his rival. It would appear that the defeated claimant and his allies are supported by the German Consul, while the British and American Consuls support the newly appointed King. This want of unanimity on the part of the Consuls appears to have given rise to considerable friction.

ACCORDING to the statements of some of the Grit members of Parliament, it is not improbable that a Dominion general election may take place before very long. It is quite possible, too, that the reform in simply intended to be a battle cry on which an appeal may be made to the people. If the truth were known it would likely be found that the idea of Senate reform originated in the brain of Mr. Tarte. Sir Wilfrid doubtless realizes that he is to be completely beaten in his Washington mission, and having failed to fulfill his election promises he feels that he is likely to be discredited with the electorate. In these straits he has likely had recourse to the master of the administration, Mr. Tarte, and the latter, no doubt, suggested this scheme of Senate reform as something likely to engage the attention of the people for the time being and to obscure the real issues before the public. However this may be the following despatch of the 20th. from Montreal, indicates there is something in the wind.—In a speech at the Liberal Club last night, Edouard Levesque, M. P. for Gaspe, warned the Liberal workers of Canada not to be deceived with the idea that the present government would fill out its whole term of five years. He had many opportunities of conferring with the Ministers and he must warn all Liberal workers that the general elections, when they come, would come suddenly and with very short notice.

OUR Local Government seems to have been all at once seized with a deep concern for the farmers of this Province. On Friday last the Premier announced that it was the intention of the Government to call, at an early day, a convention of our citizens and bitter men, representing the factors now existing in the Province, said convention to be addressed by persons high up in the scale of agricultural knowledge. Right on the heels of this intimation we have in Saturday's Patriot extracts from a letter of the Minister of Agriculture to Premier Farquharson stating that Professor Robertson and Professor McDonough would likely visit the Island towards the latter end of February and deliver addresses on agriculture and horticulture. No doubt our farmers will be glad to hear these professors; but we imagine they will naturally ask themselves what the cause of this new zeal on the part of the Government really is. Our farmers will readily call to mind that our Grit Government dismissed our Professor of Agriculture, abolished our agricultural exhibitions and systematically neglected our agricultural interests for the past seven years. Our farmers may be very sure this concern for their welfare on the part of the Government is not purely disinterested; they may be sure the Government have some ulterior object in view. Elections are pending in the fourth and fifth districts of Prince County and, no doubt, the Government hope to gain a few votes by diverting attention to their own shortcomings, with

this talk about an agricultural convention. Electors, beware of these men; do not allow them to fool you any longer. Let your motto be: we distrust the Grits even when bearing gifts.

The extract quoted below is indisputable proof of one of the many blunders made by the present Government at Ottawa, namely the question of reciprocity with the United States. If the Government had hoped or desired to obtain any reasonable measure of reciprocity with the neighboring Republic, they should surely know that our Yankee friends would not be disposed to make any important concessions if they themselves should have obtained beforehand, without compensation, nearly all the concessions they desired. The question of free corn was fully discussed and aimed at the time the concession was granted. Now, even the Government supporters are obliged to confess it was a mistake. The extract here printed is from a letter written by Mr. John Chamberlain, M. P., one of the Canadian Commissioners now in Washington, to the Winnipeg Tribune, edited by a Liberal member of Parliament. After discussing the chances of obtaining a treaty of some kind, which he is apparently not over sanguine, he proceeds: "I quite agree with you that it was a mistake to allow corn upon the free list until we had negotiated for some concession upon the other side as a quid pro quo for taking that step. It is no doubt advantageous for farmers in Ontario to be able to buy cheap grain for stock feeding purposes, but I fear the proposition to substitute barley in the Northwest for feeding purposes would hardly work as well, for it is not likely that it can be laid down in Ontario at the price for which corn is furnished. However, it would have been better to have waited a while before putting it on the free list, as we had reciprocity negotiations in view when the step was taken last session."

On the 17th. inst. Sir John Bourne, Clerk of the Dominion House of Commons, lectured before the Historical Society of Nova Scotia, in the Legislative Council Chamber at Halifax on the "Origin of Nova Scotians." The Halifax Herald published a report of the lecture, and from this report we take the extract given below. The learned lecturer after referring to Sir William Young, Sir Brenton Halliburton, and several others, dwelt at considerable length on the greatness of Hon. Joseph Howe. "The lecturer then proceeded," says the report "to refer to Sir Charles Tupper, so-called the 'Grit' of Nova Scotia and Dominion politics. He continues to show that tenacity of opinion, that power of argument, that confidence in himself, and that belief in Canada's ability to hold her own on this Continent, which have been always characteristics of a remarkable career, and although he is now drawing to the end of his eightieth decade of years, time has in no sense dimmed his intellect, but, on the contrary, he is capable of the same vigorous oratory which was first displayed in the old chamber at the other end of this building, while years have only given additional breadth to his statesmanship. Sir John Thompson—the friend of the lecturer from 1864 until his death—was a statesman of worthy ambitions and noble motives, a remarkably close reasoner and a logical speaker, who had hardly an equal for clearness of expression in the house of commons of Canada. His life in the Dominion field of politics was one of promise rather than of performance in successful statesmanship, and it was doubtful if he ever could have been willing to master all the arts and intrigues of a successful politician. In him, Canada lost a man who, above all others, would have brought to the supreme court of Canada or to the judicial committee of the privy council of the empire a clearness of intellect, a soundness of judgment and an accumulated store of legal knowledge as well as intensity of purpose which would have been invaluable to this country during this practically formative stage of our constitution."

The Surplus. The Star, of Montreal, has devoted some attention to "the surplus" of which Mr. Fielding boasts and over which there has been much liberal rejoicing. It shows that the "surplus" is not the result of economy, but of increased revenue resulting from more taxes paid out of the people's pockets. "A statement of what would have been the result had former Finance Ministers secured as much money from the people, will show in a measure the meaning of Mr. Fielding's surplus. Let us go back to the beginning of this decade and make a little calculation upon the supposition that for each year from that ending with June, 1890, down to that ending the summer of 1898—the last under Conservative control—the national revenue had been as large as that which gave Mr. Fielding his surplus; and we shall find that Mr. Foster would never have had deficit—would, indeed, always have had a larger surplus than the Fielding's achievement to boast of. On this supposition the surplus for these seven years of Tory rule would have been as follows:

The Premier and the Jail.

One paragraph in the report of the Grand Jury, assembled at the Hillary, Terms of the Supreme Court, now sitting in this city, has unearthed certain facts in a sense very amusing; but which in their last analysis are by no means creditable to the Government. Before their discharge the Grand Jurors; according to custom and in pursuance of their duty, visited the public institutions under the control of the Provincial Government, and embodied in their report to the Court their impressions regarding the management of these institutions. The Jurors say:—"We also visited the County Jail and report the heating insufficient and the bedding inadequate and are satisfied that the time has come when a new building is an absolute necessity, and believe that an improvement in the internal management would be in the public interest." This is the portion of the report upon which we beg to offer a few comments. We quite agree with the jurors that it is time the old jail building was replaced with a more modern structure, in some other locality. In our opinion, the jail should no longer occupy a position on one of our principal squares; but should be on the outskirts of the city. We are further of the opinion that one jail would be sufficient for the whole Province, instead of one in each county as at present. This is a question, however, that may be discussed some other time, what we wish to call attention to just now is the question of inadequacy of bedding referred to in the report of the Grand Jurors. The report under review appeared in the daily papers on the 13th. inst. On the 14th. the Patriot announced that in connection with the paragraph above quoted, referring to the jail, Premier Farquharson, Attorney-General McDonough and Assistant Jailor McNeill met the reporters of the three daily papers in the Premier's office, when the following information was given to the press. The Premier stated that, in consequence of a report from Mr. McNeill, Assistant Jailor, he procured eighteen yards of "some cheap and serviceable blanketing," of the Moncton Woolen Mills manufacture, for the use of the jail. This material was at once procured and placed in a box by Jailor Harvey, who, although his attention was more than once called to the matter, had not got up to the time of the Grand Jury's visit, distributed them among the prisoners. The average reader will surely be astonished at the number of blankets that were made out of the eighteen yards of "cheap and serviceable" material procured by the Premier. Seventeen blankets out of eighteen yards: that is to say, an average of one yard two inches and two-seventenths of an inch to each blanket. Perhaps, after all, it is not to be wondered at that the blankets were not distributed to the prisoners. It will scarcely be disputed that when the mercury goes down several degrees below zero, a blanket a yard square is not sufficient protection for even a poor prisoner. The ludicrousness of the case so forced itself upon one of our local poets that he comes out in the Examiner in this fashion:—

SOON LEFT HER. "I was taken with a swelling in my feet and limbs. I was not able to walk for four months. I read about Hood's Sarsaparilla and procured a bottle. Before I had taken it all, the swelling left. I took three bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla and have not been troubled with swelling since."—REARSON SEEVERS, Chairman, HOOD'S PILLS cure all Liver Ills. Mailed for 25 cents by C. L. Hood & Co., Lowell, Mass.

Ear then wall In the jail All the prisoners leave as bedding— For they're very short of bedding: The place is old, and blank, and bare, And Jack Frost has entered,—where The cobwebs are not stufed with hair, In the jail.

Farquharson! What's he done? Bought some "job-lots," nice and cheap, So the locked-up ones may sleep, Little pieces,—one yard square— Perhaps an inch or two to spare; Can you wonder that they swear, In the jail.

Shivering men, In the "pen," Think upon the nursery rhyme Which they learned in childhood's time; And tick their heads beneath their wings And double up their legs—poor things And tie their blankets down with strings.

Thus far we have considered the case under review in connection with the declaration of the Grand Jury and the evidence of the Premier and Mr. McNeill. Another phase of the question now presents itself. The Guardian of the 18th. says that Miss Harvie, sister of Jailor Harvie, called at the Guardian office and stated that the blanketing purchased for the jail, by the Premier "only consisted of 12 blankets, and was not got for the immediate use of the inmates of the jail, but merely to have in readiness for some future occasion; and moreover the making of the blankets referred to was not completed until a day or two before the investigation." She also stated that the jail had previously been "supplied with a sufficient number of blankets," but that many of them were dirty and would remain so until they would receive pay from the Government for washing some of them. About a year ago, which she claimed had not been received. This, she said, accounted for the lack of bed clothing that came under the observation of the Grand Jury. This latter evidence would seem to indicate that the whole business is scarcely anything else than a case of washing dirty linen. It is not at all improbable that this is but a small portion of the dirty linen the Government have to wash; but it was scarcely expect-

ed that they would have entered upon the process before the public in this peculiar fashion.

A Farmer's Movement.

The farmers of the Eastern Townships of Quebec waited upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier last week and demanded that he keep his promise to reduce taxation. Says the Huntingdon Gleaner:—"One solitary protest, however telling, cannot be expected to change the policy of the Government. The example set must be followed if the voice of the farmers is to be listened to."

The farmers of this Province without respect of party politics ought to follow the example of those of the Eastern Townships. Laurier, Tarte & Co. should be held to their pre-election promise. The National Liberal Convention passed this resolution in 1898:—"We cannot but view with alarm the large increase of the public debt and the consequent personal expenditure of the Dominion, and the consequent undue taxation of the people, and we demand the strictest economy in the administration of the Government of the country." Yet, as has been pointed out, the first year of the new Liberalism produced this financial result:—

Increased debt.....\$3,041,163 Increased expenditure.....1,400,008 Increased taxation.....889,341 The second year had this effect:—

Increased debt.....\$3,417,802 Increased expenditure.....491,766 Increased taxation.....927,829 The two years together read thus:—

Increased debt.....\$5,458,965 Increased expenditure.....1,892,374 Increased taxation.....1,817,180 Surely it is time that the farmers not of the Eastern Townships alone, but those of Canada at large, began to send in their protests.

Worthy of Note. The Montreal Times points out that the operation of the I. C. R. for the past six years has been productive of the following financial results:—

Surplus. Deficit. 1893.....\$37,807 1894.....21,169 1895.....23,253 1896.....54,260 1897.....60,000 1898.....189,000

It will be seen that Mr. Haggart had three surpluses and one deficit, the net surplus in his four years being over thirty thousand dollars. Mr. Blair has been Minister of Railways for two full years, 1897 and 1898, and the figures speak for themselves. It is to be remembered, too, that in Mr. Haggart's time there was commercial depression and railway traffic was not large; while, in Mr. Blair's time there has been a commercial boom by reason of which the C. P. R. and G. T. R. have raised in handsome profits. The result of the operation of the I. C. R., under these circumstances, is worthy of note.

Mr. Chamberlain Speaks.

Mr. Chamberlain at a recent banquet of the Writemanship Chamber of Commerce reviewed at length the various threatening French questions confronting the Government in connection with the withdrawing of the French demand for an extension of the settlement of Shanghai. He welcomed the changing tone on the part of France, declaring that if the French Government desired an amicable settlement of difficulties Great Britain would meet France more than halfway. Dwelling largely upon the Newfoundland difficulty, the Minister said that in spite of charges to the contrary, nobody has the slightest desire to evade the obligations of the Treaty of Utrecht, but we do desire that the rights conferred upon France by that treaty should not be extended and abused to the injury of our pockets. If when these rights are properly defined they are found to possess a value to France, we shall be willing to observe them, or if France is willing to arrange for their extinction on fair, reasonable terms of compensation, Mr. Chamberlain says a high tribute to the success of Lord Salisbury's foreign policy, remarking: "It is a cause for satisfaction that two of the great nations, Germany and the United States, both protectionists at home, have proclaimed their intention to adhere to the open door for their foreign possessions."

Fielding's Venerable Fiction.

At a Liberal rally in the hall of the Monument National, Montreal, on the evening of the 3rd, Mr. Fielding indulged in some justification over the red-ink returns for the twelve months ending 30th. June last. He claimed a surplus, but did so by reverting to the use of the venerable juggle between expenditure chargeable to the consolidated fund and chargeable to capital account. His alleged surplus of \$1,722,000 is purely fictitious, a mere manipulation of bookkeeping entries. The real figures are:—

Income for year '98.....\$40,555,000 Expenditure for year ending June, '98.....42,972,000 Deficit.....\$2,417,000

The income for these twelve months was the largest the Dominion has known, yet despite of that, 2 1/2 million dollars more were spent. With 4 million more to spend than in 1898, this is a discouraging showing.—Huntingdon Gleaner (Lib.).

Spaniards Killed.

The str. Labuan, Capt. Fort, which returned to Labuan, British Borneo on the 23rd, from the Island of Palawan, in the southwestern portion of the Philippines, reports that a number of Spaniards were murdered by natives while coming from church. The natives then retired to the hills, taking the women and children and some of the men as prisoners. A Spanish gunboat and a mail boat called and left again. Captain Fort interviewed the natives and brought away the governor's wife, the other women and children, a priest and twelve soldiers, all of whom he now sails for Sandakan, British Borneo.

Hugh John Macdonald.

The following letter requires no comment:—

Epidemic of Resignations.

Advice from Vancouver, B. C. dated the 17th. says:—Ex-Premier Turner and Colonel Baker of the opposition, and Hon. Mr. Hume, provincial secretary and minister of mines in the present government have resigned and Premier Semlin is to follow suit. This will make a total of seven members resigning in the past week for trivial reasons or so. Other resignations are spoken of and it is feared as a result of the crisis to resign there will not be a quorum left. Tisdale's resignation the other day was engineered by Martin to bluff Hall of the opposition into resigning. His knew Tisdale would be returned by acclamation and expected Colonel Gregory would defeat Hall in Victoria, making a net gain of one member for the government. Now there is hardly a member of the opposition who does not believe he is discredited, but unfortunately Martin's cleverness has proved a boomerang and government members have become similarly affected.

Great Admiral's Remains.

The casket containing the remains of Christopher Columbus, which arrived at Cadix, Spain, on the 16th. inst. on board the Spanish cruiser Girarda, for conveyance to Seville, was opened. About 30 bones and some ashes were found in the casket. It was resealed and interred at Seville with great solemnity and repose in the cathedral. The route of the procession was lined with troops.

Cassation is Slow.

The French senate on the 19th. indulged in another somewhat noisy debate on the subject of a slight partiality and alousness of the court of cassation. The Minister of Justice, M. Lebre, defended the court and urged the necessity of maintaining a separation between legislative and judicial powers. A resolution approving of the Minister of Justice was adopted by a vote of 112 to 28. In the chamber of deputies same day, M. Pascal Groussé, radical socialist, introduced the question of sub-marine boats.

No Reduction of Royalty.

Rather disappointing news awaited Sir Charles Tupper upon his arrival at Ottawa on Friday last. The announcement is one also which will be unwelcome to many Canadians who like Sir Charles are interested in the development of the Yukon. It is to the effect that there is to be no reduction in the 10 per cent royalty of the output of gold in the Yukon, but that the amount exempted from royalty is to be increased from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

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Hugh John Macdonald.

The following letter requires no comment:—

Ira Stratton, Esq., Editor of the Argus, Stonewall, Mat:—

Sir,—A friend of mine has just handed me a copy of the Argus of Thursday, December 22nd, and has pointed to an item in it stating that I had informed a leading Conservative that I would neither be a leader of the Government nor of the Opposition in the next Legislature. I will depend on the electors of Manitoba to decide whether I shall be leader of the Government or of the Opposition after the next general election, but if I am alive I will undoubtedly lead the Conservative party in the next fight, and unless I lose their confidence in the interval, or fall to secure a seat, I will hold the position of their leader in the next Legislature. I should be obliged by your inserting this in your next issue, and remain,

Yours truly,

HUGH J. MACDONALD.

The Supreme Court.

The trial of George Thorne, for manslaughter, ended on Thursday evening last, when he was acquitted. The court has been engaged for some time since then in trying civil cases, and one or two lottery cases. Yesterday the second of the Grand manslaughter trials commenced, that of Edward Hughes. This trial is now going on. The Chief Justice is trying the case, the Attorney-General and John A. McDonald appear for the Crown and W. S. Stewart, Q. C. conducts the defence.

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