

The Echo

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MONTREAL, August 29, 1891.

THE ECHO is mailed to subscribers at a distance every Friday evening, and delivered in the city early on Saturday. Parties not receiving their paper regularly should communicate with the office.

THE DOMINION CONGRESS.

The convention of labor reformers under the name of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress which assembles at Quebec on Monday next is likely to be a remarkable one in many respects. The recent disclosures in political circles and the knavery and dishonesty proved to have been in practice in various departments of the Government service, gives ample ground for reformers to attack the existing methods of conducting public business and appointing Government employees. The time, a great many consider, is also ripe for the formation of a new party in politics, independent of either at present existing, with a platform on the lines of the People's Party of the United States, whose rapid growth within the past year has awakened the keenest interest among politicians of both political stripes across the border and make them tremble for the result. The downfall of the present rotten system of Government in vogue in Canada and the upraising of a pure, unselfish model for the people and by the people would be an undertaking worthy of the Dominion Congress. Amongst the delegates there are men who would count party adherence as nothing if a fair prospect of success in this new movement was held out, and there are others who would willingly take the initiative in weaning the people from the servile partyism to which in Canada the majority are unfortunately wedded. Let it be the aim of the Congress, then, to secure honest government at the expense of party; to liberate the people from the control of rings, combines, trusts and contractors and to educate them up to a purer standard of political morals. There would be very little gained by throwing over one party as at present constituted for another. The same forces to degrade the one would be at work as in the other, and Mick's and Nick's among capitalists would still be factors in controlling legislation whereby they could rob the public treasury. What should be done first is to arouse the public conscience—it is almost ripe for conviction now—to the anomalies of our system of government, to the enormous influence of the capitalistic class in directing legislation; to the political and social disadvantages under which the producers of wealth labor, and to instil sound principles of political economy in the minds of the people. With the groundwork thoroughly prepared, with the spread of education and a better know-

ledge of the duties of citizenship, there is hope that ere long a truer and nobler system of self-government will arise. The duty of the Congress is to lead the way and the people will follow.

THE PRINTING BUREAU.

Mr. Senecal, according to himself, is a very much abused man. He has written two letters, one to the Hon. J. A. Chapleau, Secretary of State, tendering his resignation as Superintendent of the Printing Bureau, and another to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, both of which are characteristic in their way; the latter especially is of such a brassy nature that it suggests a considerable admixture of copper alloy in Mr. Senecal's nature. That gentleman has had so much experience in searching for hard metal type that his moral feelings have become hardened in the search, for he fails to discover, or at least does not admit the impeachment, that there is any moral wrong in accepting commissions from firms for placing orders. It is useless to say that these commissions did not come out of the public purse or that the cost of the material furnished was not enhanced thereby. Everybody knows different from that, and Mr. Senecal should be made to disgorge every cent he has obtained in this way. The committee are not yet through with Mr. Senecal, who no doubt knows a great deal more about the workings of this institution than what has been made public, and they should not let him down until the whole scandal connected therewith has been probed to the bottom. During the enquiry a faint glimmer of light was shed upon one transaction, in which the secretary of State was involved, but Mr. Chapleau vigorously opposed the introduction of any evidence tending to implicate himself and he was promptly and slavishly backed up by his colleagues. The little that did reach the public concerning La Presse and the New England Paper Co. has a very shady appearance. If the transaction was not otherwise than honest and above-board why was Mr. Chapleau so eager to suppress any evidence regarding it? It is absolutely necessary, in order to judge of Mr. Chapleau's position in this affair, that the whole story should be known.

"BIRTHRIGHT IN LAND."

Under this title an Aberdeen lawyer has just republished the famous "Essay on the Right of Property in Land with Respect to its Foundation in the Law of Nature, Its Present Establishment by the Municipal Laws of Europe and the Regulations by which it might be rendered more beneficial to the lower ranks of mankind," first issued in 1782. Its author was William Ogilvie, Professor of Humanity, and lecturer on Political and Natural History, &c., in the University and King's College, Aberdeen. The republication of this volume proves that the theory of land nationalization by Mr. Henry George was anticipated by the Aberdeen professor about one hundred years ago and is another illustration of the proverb that there is "nothing new under the sun." From a cursory reading of the book it is evident that to regard the author as an uncompromising iconoclast in his general attitude toward private ownership of land would evidently be a mistake. On the contrary, he freely admits that there "is no country under the sun" which stands less in need of important innovations respecting property in land than Great Britain; and his Essay was actually inscribed "to the worthy and humane English landholders, and more particularly to those who of late years have voluntarily granted to their tenants an abatement of rent." As regards the cultivation of the soil, again, his statements are that "men employed in cultivating the soil, if suffered to enjoy a reasonable independence and a just share of the produce of their toil,

are of simpler manners, and more virtuous, honest dispositions than any other class of men. Their industry is not like that of the laboring manufacturer, insidiously uniform, but varied—it excludes idleness without imposing excessive drudgery, and its reward consists in abundance of necessary accommodations, without luxury and refinement." Sound enough sentiments these surely; and not less sound is the dictum that it is by the progeny chiefly of this same class "that the waste of great cities, of armies, navies, and commercial manufacturing occupations is continually supplied."

That Professor Ogilvie was an independent and vigorous thinker, every one of the seventy-five numbered propositions, into which his Essay is divided, bears witness. His starting point is that "all right of property" in land "is founded either in occupancy or labor;" and he holds that, "the earth having been given to mankind in common occupancy, each individual seems to have by nature a right to possess and cultivate an equal share," this right being little different from that which every man has "to the free use of the open air and running water." Possession of more than his natural share (his birthright) by a man cannot of right preclude the claim of any other person who is not already possessed of an equal share. From this basis Professor Ogilvie works onward in order to prove that the right of a landholder to an estate "can consist only in the labor which he and those to whom he has succeeded, or from whom he has purchased, have bestowed on the improvement and fertilization of the soil." To this extent the right is, he admits, natural and just, only "it cannot supersede the natural right of occupancy which nine hundred and ninety-nine other persons have to their equal share of the soil in its original state." It may be doubted whether we are much nearer the realization of any scheme of land nationalization than was the case in Professor Ogilvie's day, although, certainly, men's ideas as to private ownership of the soil have undergone more change of late than could have been anticipated; but, in any case, his Essay, as a very clearly and distinctly original mental exercise of kind, will reward perusal.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

There is a scheme to form a colony on the Bellamy plan on top of Mount Penn, which overlooks Reading, Penn. Participation in the scheme is secured by purchasing a share of the community stock, but nobody can become a purchaser who is not personally agreeable to the other shareholders. Each purchaser is to have a deed in fee simple to his acre or more of ground, but he can transfer his deed only to a family that is unobjectionable to the other members of the community. Each shareholder is to build upon his lot according to his means, within certain general limitations as to style and design prescribed by the community. The tract of land is circular in form, each separate lot forming the segment of a circle. In the centre a general dining hall, a library and reading room, and amusement pavilions are to be erected, while carriage drives are to surround the whole reservation and intersect the lots here and there. All the cooking and laundry work is to be done in the main building, and the grounds and drives are to be tended by gardeners at common cost.

A Hindoo philosopher was lately caught in Chicago. It was a hot evening, and he was taking a suburban stroll in tropical costume—to wit: six yards of linen girt about the waist, with ends falling to the knees, and a linen shirt "cut very décolleté." The shocked Chicagoans sent for the police to arrest "a crazy colored man, half naked." The police lieutenant on investigation found the eccentric colored gentleman to be a resident of Bombay—Noiayan

by name. He produced a number of letters from British officials showing that he was a philosopher of more than ordinary erudition, and a Christian philanthropist to boot. He is traveling in America in order more effectually to equip his mind, the matter in which his powers are chiefly exercised just now being the amelioration of the condition of women in his native land. The police lieutenant apologized to Noiayan for the arrest and let him go, but at the same time gently suggested the addition to his wardrobe of articles prescribed by American prejudice if not by Oriental philosophy.

From various sources it is learned that the lately issued balance sheets of the two principal London 'bus companies do not disclose all the difficulties with which the directors will have to cope. The agreement as to the hours of labor is not being fully carried out by the companies. Confusion and uncertainty prevail as to the hours which the men are supposed to work and grumbling is widespread. The Union of Tram and 'Bus men, however, which is being organized by the London Trades' Council, has gathered the greater proportion of the employees into its ranks, and if trouble arises will be in a much better position for a labor war than when the strike took place some months ago.

The Ninth Police Court of Paris has condemned 65 persons, known as the "False Accident Gang," to punishments varying from a fine of 200f. to three years' imprisonment. Their method of proceeding was briefly as follows: A coachman would pretend to run over a man or woman, a policeman would testify to the accident having occurred, and the victim would be kept in bed for some time. The company employing the coachman would proceed to verify the affair, and the person sent by them would report the case a genuine, when the company would pay a part of the claim for damages. Everybody in the case—even the policeman—would belong to the gang.

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