

The crisis in Quebec will, no doubt, be the cause of much excitement not only in Quebec, but in all the other provinces. The question of the competency of the Lieutenant-Governor of a province to dismiss a ministry which is supported by a majority in the Legislature will be warmly discussed. There will, most likely, be a difference of opinion as to whether it would not be the constitutional way for the Governor to have waited until the decision of the representatives of the people had been given on the conduct of the ministers in the Bois des Chaleurs, and other cases. There will certainly be many who will maintain that the right of judgment, in the first instance, lay with the representatives of the people, and that, if the Governor was not satisfied with their decision, he could, constitutionally, appeal from them to the people from whom they derived their authority. This, it appears to us, would have been the more constitutional, as well as the more politic course. Allowing that Governor Angers is, in the abstract, right—as we believe he is—in dismissing ministers whom he believes to be corrupt, would it not have been more correct in him not to have more than an excuse to represent them as having acted arbitrarily and unconstitutionally in dismissing them before the Legislative Assembly had been allowed the opportunity of giving its verdict?

From our last night's special telegram from Ottawa we conclude that the party which approves of the course taken by the Lieutenant-Governor, hopes, or expects, that by the formation of a coalition Government an appeal to the people, just at present, will be avoided. Of course, those who are on the spot are the best judges, but it seems to us that it will be very difficult indeed to form a coalition Government in Quebec that will stand any chance of living through even one session.

Mr. Mercier is a most astute politician. He perhaps understands the people of his native province better than any man living. He knows how to appeal to them so as to enlist their prejudices and their feelings on his side. It was seen what he made of the Riel question. He then contrived to make the French Canadians believe that when the Dominion Government allowed Riel to be executed a slight was put upon their race, and that their religion was contemned. Unfortunately, the course taken by some Ontario politicians and some Ontario newspapers, since then, has been such as to keep alive among the French Canadians the belief that their religion is hated and their race despised by the people of Ontario, and that an effort is being made to do them a great injustice. The power of misrepresentation of the Mercier faction is simply immense, and it is well known that they have no scruples in using it. They speak the language of the people, and they know how to work upon their predilections and their weaknesses. It would be difficult to over-estimate their influence over the people when their race jealousy and their religious distrust are awakened. Anyone who intelligently observed the nature and the extent of the Riel agitation will not place much faith in the coolness and calmness of French Canadians. They are an exceedingly excitable people, and when their feelings are aroused they are not by any means disposed to listen to reason. Mr. Mercier and his lieutenants know this well, and we are much mistaken if, as soon as they find themselves out of office, they do not exert themselves to make it impossible for any Ministry that Governor Angers may be able to get together, to carry on the Government.

If an appeal is made to the people now, it is very hard indeed to tell what may be the result. If Mercier can only convince the people that he is being made a martyr of because he is a Frenchman and a Catholic—that he is the victim of the "Orangistes" and the "bigots" of Ontario—he will be returned with a larger majority than ever, no matter how corrupt he and his colleagues may have been. This we have no doubt he will attempt to do. Will he succeed in working up the excitement high enough, and spreading it widely enough to accomplish his purpose?

It is evident that Governor Angers has made a bold move, and risked a great deal. It is just possible that the very boldness of his measures will go far to secure success. Will he be energetically and courageously backed up by the lovers of honest government in the province of Quebec? Every thing depends upon the answer given to that question.

BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE.

The Oregonian expatiating on the difficulty between the United States and Chili is scathing in its denunciations of the unfortunate and incompetent Britisher. "The British tradesman is a prevailing force. His rancorous voice is to be heard, his smug and mottled visage seen, and his stable-boy manners felt all over the world. He is becoming as universal as his softer-spoken commercial counterpart and rival in the scene of barter. From Gibraltar around the globe back to Suz, he is to be found in all lands and climes, bartering, colonizing, protecting, meddling, improving and extorting. He loaves races he destroys, to a step higher he enslaves, those capable of self-government he flatters and bullies, coaxes and frightens, intrigues and coaxes into commercial arrangements for his enrichment. From Drake's time down, the British tradesman has led British Empire round the world, and it is a curious coincidence that his present sphere of greatest activity is in the seas Drake opened to commerce. Nearly every day in which England engaged from the time of Elizabeth to the bombardment of Alexandria has had a commercial inspiration; has been undertaken

to advance the interests or avenge the injuries of the British trader. This is amusing, particularly when we reflect upon the fact that this denunciation is uttered in the language of the "tradesman" whom it condemns, and that it was, in all probability, penned by a, not by any means, remote descendant of this detestable "British trader," with "rancorous voice," "smug and mottled visage" and "stable-boy manners." The chances, too, are that, like very many of his fellow citizens, he has inherited more of the faults and defects of his ancestor than he has of his powers and his virtues.

We are surprised that an intelligent man, as the editor of the American newspaper must be, does not see that, in abusing the British tradesman, he is in a sense traducing himself and his fellow-countrymen. It is very evident that the American citizen of to-day has to be thankful that the republic of which he is so proud was founded and maintained, and strengthened and enlarged, and enriched by British tradesmen and their kindred of other professions. The British tradesman is the leaven that has leavened the whole lump of American citizenship. He has not only given the United States his language, but he has handed down to its people their free institutions, their intelligent love of liberty and their capacity for self-government. Why is it that the Republic of the United States of North America is not like the republic of Mexico, the republic of Central America, and the republic of South America? Simply because it was established by "British tradesmen" and their descendants, and because the influence of the British tradesman has been the predominant one in it since the day of its establishment.

It does not say much for the intelligence and capacity of men whose very names show that they belong to the same race as the British tradesman, and who ought to know what he has done in his own and other countries, to exhaust their vocabulary of injurious epithets upon the "British tradesman." They should have more knowledge and more sense than to traduce and disparage themselves in such an outrageous manner.

With regard to the disagreement with Chili, the United States Government has no one to blame but itself for that unpleasantness. The British trader did not send that accomplished diplomat, Patrick Egan, to Chili, neither had he anything to do with the seizure, detention and subsequent capture of the Itata. It was not at the instigation of the British trader that Admiral Brown played the spy on the patriot army, that was fighting for the recovery of the constitutional liberty which Egan's friend and fellow-speculator, Balmaceda, had stolen from Chilians. If any nation had treated the United States, under similar circumstances, as the United States had treated Chili, it would never be forgiven by United States citizens.

GOOD ADVICE.

The Canadian Gazette is evidently of opinion that gentle treatment will have a better effect on Newfoundland than harsh measures, for it says: "Nothing could well be more unfortunate than a quarrel between brothers, and the dispute between Canada and Newfoundland respecting the consideration of the Newfoundland Bail Act is a bad example of its kind. The Nova Scotian fishermen, naturally enough, do not like to see the Gloucester fishermen given privileges in Newfoundland waters which are denied to them, fellow-colonists though they are; and the Newfoundland Government, with equal plausibility, resents what it deems Canadian interference in Newfoundland's trade relations with the United States. The dispute is just such a one as should lend itself to quiet friendly discussion. Let a round-table conference be set up at Ottawa or St. John's, as the daily Chronicle suggests, and it will be arranged if allowed and conciliatory statesmen like Sir John Thompson and Sir William Whitehead do not find a peaceful way out of the difficulty. In the meantime, only good can come from a reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the question of the powers of Newfoundland under the Bail Act. But as to the retaliation for which the Nova Scotian fishermen are reported to be clamouring, the less said of it the better. To put on a retaliatory duty would irritate the Newfoundlanders and do Canadian fishermen precious little good."

It is greatly to be regretted that this good advice has come too late. The Dominion Government has taken its course, and it cannot now, we presume, retract.

THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

The Northwest Territories' Legislature is in session. The Speech from the Throne was very long and in some respects important. Owing to the changes in the Northwest Territories Act, which is the constitution of that part of the Dominion, the Legislature is invested with new powers which render the reorganization of the Government necessary. The representatives of the people have no greater control than formerly over the money voted by the Dominion Parliament, and they can enact ordinances relative to the liquor traffic. As the provision of the constitution relative to the Advisory Council had not been repealed, there are difficulties in the way of the formation of a Government responsible to the Legislature. This Advisory Council was the bone of contention in the last Assembly. The Governor could call upon it or not as he pleased, and it could act independently of the majority of the Assembly. It was hoped that under the new state of things this Council would be abolished and that a constitutional Government could be established in its place. Some of the members imagine that the important clause in the Northwest Act providing for the appointment of the Advisory Council was left un-repealed by mistake. This is not very probable. Its being in the Act is likely to cause trouble, for the new Assembly is evidently not disposed to tolerate it. The Governor, however, has the power of appointing it whether the majority of the

THE MAYORALTY.

The question now most frequently asked in this city is: Who is to be Mayor next year? This question is a very important one and requires to be very considered. Before it is answered definitively, the electors should enquire—What will the next Mayor have to do? and when that is well understood, it may then be asked: Where is the man fit to do it?

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

The following is the first paragraph in the issue of the Canadian Gazette of December 3. The Hon. John Robson, British Columbia Premier, was pleasantly occupied, on the last day of mail arrivals from the Province, in picking strawberries—large and juicy fruit—in his garden in Victoria. How well this reads when Londoners are gasping for breath in damp November mists and fogs!

THE PREROGATIVE.

All who know anything about the Canadian Constitution must admit that Mr. Bourinot is right when he says that Governor Angers has the power to dismiss his Ministers without asking any one's advice. All intelligent persons know, too, that the head of a Government, under the British Constitution, possesses important prerogatives theoretically, which he does not deem it wise to exercise in these days. The power of the veto is one of these, and the power of dismissing ministers without reference to the will or the action of Parliament is another. Theoretically, the Sovereign of Great Britain has the power to refuse his or her sanction to any law which Parliament may pass; but, practically, in these days the power is never exercised. Theoretically, the Queen can call upon any one to be her adviser, and can, when she pleases, summarily dismiss him; but, practically, it is Parliament that has the choosing of the Sovereign's advisers, and it is Parliament that decides how long they shall continue to be Ministers of the Crown. These whom the Queen calls to her counsels must have the confidence of the House of Commons, and when they lose that confidence, they do not wait to be turned out. They resign their positions and give place to men who are approved by the representatives of the people. The crisis would have to be very grave and very urgent indeed, when a King or Queen of Great Britain would exercise the prerogative of dismissing a Cabinet in the way that Governor Angers has done. The Sovereign has, undoubtedly, the power to send the members of a Cabinet about their business, but it is a power which would not be exercised unless there was an absolute certainty that the nation would be satisfied with the action of the Crown. It is most difficult to imagine what a British sovereign would do in circumstances similar to those in which Governor Angers placed, because it is impossible to conceive of British ministers acting in the way in which Mr. Mercier and his colleagues have acted. British statesmen are, in these days, literally above suspicion. An Englishman would as soon think of accusing Lord Salisbury or Mr. Gladstone of picking pockets or of stealing spoons, as of having anything to do, remotely or indirectly, with any act that has the appearance of corruption. As the two leaders, so of all the prominent men of both parties. It may be that some members of the British Parliament are connected in some way with jobbery, that they get a share of the booty which they help outsiders to steal; but if they do they must be wonderfully clever in concealing their tracks, for, though the press is as free in Great Britain as it is in any country under the sun, and though public men of all grades and in every capacity are exposed to the sharpest and most searching criticism, it is very seldom, indeed, that a member of Parliament gives those who observe his acts reason even to suspect that he makes use of his position to enrich himself at the public expense. Such is the state of public opinion in Great Britain, that if a representative of the people gave the public good reason to suspect that he was, no matter how indirectly, a bootler, there would be an end to his career as a public man. If such were the state of public opinion in the province of Quebec, Mr. Angers' course would be plain and easy. The Ministry convicted of being associated with bootlers and of sharing the spoils with dishonest public contractors and blackmailers would be driven out of office by the outraged and indignant nation. They would not dare to make their appearance in public. They would be followed wherever they went by the hoots and execrations of the people. It would be, indeed, impossible to protect them from violence. They would hasten to resign the positions they had discharged before worse things came upon them. But it is useless to try to conjecture how the British people would treat such men as are implicated in the Quebec scandal. A Mercier is impossible in Great Britain in these days, and it is very much to be regretted that he is possible in Quebec or any other province of this Dominion.

Ald. Soullard, of Westminster, is in town.

In trade may be felt, neither of them can impose import duties on the commodities produced by the other. But British colonies can do this. At this present moment the Dominion and the colony of Newfoundland are commercially at loggerheads, and are imposing duties on each other's products, resembling nothing so much as a bad-tempered pair, who, when they quarrel, begin smearing the crockery which is their common property. Of course the two colonies are acting very foolishly and are abusing their independence. But the very fact that they can carry on such a war shows that they are independent.

It may be admitted that, for the purpose of self-government, Canada is independent. This independence may be owing to the forbearance of the Mother Country, or it may be a consequence of the development of the country. Five millions of Anglo-Saxons cannot be kept in a state of pupillage and dependence. They will assert their right to govern themselves, and British statesmen have shown their wisdom in spontaneously and cheerfully recognizing that right.

In the matter of her relations with foreign countries, Canada cannot be said to enjoy the same amount of independence as she does in the management of her trade and her internal affairs. It is generally understood that a nation which treats on equal terms with another nation is strong enough to enforce any agreement that may be made or to punish the breach of that agreement by physical force. Civilized and Christian as the nations are, this idea of brute force is never altogether lost sight of or ignored in their dealings with each other. It cannot be denied that Canada is not in a position to back up her words with a blow, if necessary, or to maintain any position she may take by an appeal to arms. But, so far, she has never felt the want of this backing of physical force. She has enjoyed the benefit of the prestige and the military strength of the Mother Country, and when arrangements were to be made in which she was peculiarly interested, she has been invited to take a part in the negotiations, and her interests have been carefully considered. In regard to her dealings with foreign nations, it, therefore, cannot be said that Canada is independent, and we do not say very well how she can, in this particular, assert the privilege of independence until she possesses the powers necessary successfully to assert independence. She may possess that power and by, by the process of natural growth and development, or she may, by a closer union with Great Britain, be able to claim the power and prestige of the Mother Country as of right.

This, we think, what is coming. We do not believe that Canada, without such an alliance, can be, for a very long time, a true independent. If she severed her connection with Great Britain, her independence, if she desired to be independent, would be merely nominal. We see the attitude which the United States and other great powers assume towards weak nations when they are far from them, and could Canadians expect fair and considerate treatment from a nation of twelve times their number if a policy they pursued did not suit the whim or the interest of their big neighbor?

The unvarnished truth is that, when all things are considered, Canada is not independent, and it does not seem to us that it would be good for her to be independent, in the sense of being an isolated nation.

LABOR IN VAIN.

It appears that Mr. Blaine's labor to establish reciprocity between the United States and the South American Republics and other tropical countries, has been in a great measure in vain. It is singular that so shrewd a man as Mr. Blaine did not take into calculation the efforts which other, and in matters of trade, much more liberal nations, would make to prevent those republics discriminating in favor of the United States. He might have remembered that the United States is not the only commercial country in the world, and that the European customers of those republics would be at some pains to convince them that they would be standing in their own light if they treated the United States with undue favor.

What he might readily have foreseen has come to pass, and the South Americans, it appears, have come to the conclusion that the Government of the Great Northern Republic asks to high a price for the trade favors which it offers. Commenting on the report of the director of the Bureau of American Republics, which the President had laid before Congress, the Oregonian says: "This is comforting reading for the patriotic American; but there is another story. An unpretentious cable dispatch, the same day, announces that the Argentine Republic and Brazil have decided to negotiate with Germany, Austro-Hungary, Italy, England and Belgium, for the establishment of a treaty of commerce. These, with Chili, which isn't likely to enter into trade reciprocity with the United States, are the most important countries of South America. Reciprocity treaties with them are, so far, only indolent dreams of the state department. Mr. Blaine made a treaty with Fonseca when he was President of Brazil, but Fonseca's government has been upset, and it is suspected that our British commercial rivals had to upset it. This treaty is likely to fall to the ground, leaving our reciprocity policy absolutely without fruit in South America."

Our contemporary goes on to say that probably no rational person ever supposed that the commercial nations of Europe would permit the United States to enjoy exclusive trade privileges in South America for any length of time; and it comes to the conclusion, after all Mr. Blaine has done, that so far from getting exclusive privileges for South America, he may consider himself lucky if Americans fare as well in that part of the world as Europeans.

A. McDougall, of Vancouver, is in town.

SUPREME COURT.

Before Mr. Justice Drake. Wilson & Daley, appellants; Corporation of Victoria, respondents.—The appellants are ratepayers in respect of real estate held by them in Victoria city, and have appealed from the decision of the County Court under Sec. 131 of the Municipality Act, 1891.

The appeal is in respect of lot 1,258 and part of 162, Government street. The first objection is that lot 1,258 and 1,259 were assessed together in the sum of \$80,000, and \$5,000 improvements, and that this mode of assessment is incorrect. The duties of an assessor are defined by sec. 122 (read it), and by sec. 124 (read it). Therefore each lot or subdivision has to be separately assessed. The object is to let every person assessed for real estate have the opportunity of objecting to the assessment if he thinks proper, and in respect of each separate piece of land. There may be tenants on one lot or part of a lot, who may be liable for the tax, and the owner may be liable for a solvent part of the tax only. I don't think that an error of the assessor in this respect will invalidate the assessment, but it is good ground of appeal, and may be a matter of costs.

In the case of *North v. et al v. Cumming*, 25 V. C. P. 109, decided on a section very similar to our section 124, the Court held that when the notice of assessment differed from the roll the notice containing an amount less than that on the roll, the tax could only be levied on the lesser amount.

In our act, if the assessor or collector fail in the duties imposed on them by statute, the only remedy is by appeal to the County Court. The assessor is provided, which, possibly, is more effectual. The next objection taken is that the assessor has assessed improvements without producing any list authorizing the same. Section 120 of the act defines the mode of estimating real property for the purpose of taxation, that is, at its actual cash value, as it would be appraised in payment of a just debt, from a solvent roll, that the tax could only be levied on the lesser amount.

If the Council desired to assess improvements separately, then a by-law had to be passed under section 121, which has not been done. This section, read with the interpretation clause, shows that unless the Council pass a by-law, declaring a distinction for the purpose of assessment between land and improvements, as an answer to this objection, but this is not a by-law for assessment, and if there is no by-law for assessment of improvements there can be no rate levied on them distinct from their land. It is not a by-law, as it does not include improvements, and improvements must not be assessed apart from the realty.

It was referred to by law passed 5th October, 1891, levying a separate rate on land and improvements, as an answer to this objection, but this is not a by-law for assessment, and if there is no by-law for assessment of improvements there can be no rate levied on them distinct from their land. It is not a by-law, as it does not include improvements, and improvements must not be assessed apart from the realty.

The next objection taken was that too high a value was placed on this land. Lot 1,258 the assessor valued at \$42,000, Mr. Wilson values at \$24,000. The assessor is supported by two real estate agents, one of whom estimated the lot 1,258 taken in conjunction with 1,259, was worth \$59,000 a foot on 120 foot frontage on Government by 120 on Johnson street, equal to \$60,000 for the two lots; if valued separately 1,258 would be worth \$30,000 frontage, or \$48,000, while the adjacent lot was worth \$18,000, thus making the lots, if sold separately, worth \$66,000, although together they stated they would be worth more than that amount. The proportion of value is, therefore, \$42,000 to \$66,000, which is a difference of over three and a half times the amount, i.e., as between \$12,000 and \$42,000; in other cases the variation is only one-seventh more, and if this lot was valued at \$30,000, the lot 1,258 would be worth \$48,000, or double the value of the adjoining lot, in consideration of its position as a corner. I find no satisfactory rule of valuation, and the assessor's valuation is, therefore, the assessor makes a difference of over three and a half times the amount, i.e., as between \$12,000 and \$42,000; in other cases the variation is only one-seventh more, and if this lot was valued at \$30,000, the lot 1,258 would be worth \$48,000, or double the value of the adjoining lot, in consideration of its position as a corner. 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