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**The Disaster at Frank.** The disaster at Frank, in Alberta, on April 29, is one of the most disastrous in Canadian history.

Frank is a coal mining town of about 4000 inhabitants on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, fifteen miles from Crow's Nest Pass, fifty miles east of Fernie, and fifty-four miles west of McLeod. It appears, that at an early hour in the morning, a prodigious land slide from the top and side of Turtle Mountain, one of the peaks of the Rockies, which tower far above the village and coal pits, buried the mine and part of the town of Frank under a mass of rock. It is estimated that eighty three lives were lost. The magnitude of the land slide is seen when it is known, that it will take 2000 men, two months, to repair the C. P. R. track. Help is being sent by the Government and towns in the vicinity.

**The Trans-Canada Railway.** So much is being said and written about the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the McKenzie and Mann system, that the Trans-Canada Railway project has been almost forgotten. But the scheme of the proposed railway is far from being dead. The directors have had three engineering parties surveying the route all winter. Their reports are most favorable. The proposed line is one of the most direct which can span the continent. Comparatively few people know anything of the vast stretch of Canadian possessions extending from Quebec to James Bay, thence to the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, and on to Fort Simpson, on the Pacific coast. Yet this is the route of the Trans-Canada Ry., and is of the greatest importance from an Imperial point of view. The proposed line will run considerably to the northward of the other trans-continental lines, although passing through part of the finest belt of wheat lands. The engineers at work along the proposed line report fine timber lands, and magnificent deposits of coal, iron, copper and gypsum. Fort Simpson, the Pacific terminus of the line, is said to have the finest harbor on the Pacific coast, north of San Francisco. The climatic observations along the line of route are very favorable. A branch line to Winnipeg will bring that town 256 miles nearer an ocean port than it is at present. The directors of the Trans-Canada Ry. figure upon a freight rate from Winnipeg to Quebec for the wheat of Manitoba and the North West Territories, which will be a saving of several cents a bushel on the present rates. In view of the possibility of an Anglo-Japanese alliance, and of a great trade between England, Canada and Japan in the near future, it is interesting to note that the distance from Liverpool to Yokohama via Trans-Canada, is shorter by 720 miles, than by any other lines. The Trans-Canada Railway is one of the possibilities of the near future.

**Progress in Medical Science.**

The world seems to have reached a period of progress in medical science. The antitoxin for diphtheria recently discovered has proved most successful, and it is now believed that physicians can successfully fight that dreaded disease. Amongst the still more recent discoveries is that of an anti-typhoid serum, obtained by Dr. Allan Macfadyen, Director of the Jenner Institute of Preventive Medicine, in London. This announcement has attracted great attention. Typhoid fever is so constant and terrible a scourge to the human race, that the discovery of a specific for it would be one of the greatest benefits possible. Dr. Macfadyen found, that by crushing the microscopic cells of the typhoid bacillus in liquid air, the intercellular juices can be obtained apart from their living organism, and that

these juices are highly toxic. By injecting them in small repeated doses into a living animal, its blood serum is rendered powerfully antitoxic and bactericidal, that is to say, it becomes an antidote alike to living typhoid bacteria, and to the poison that may be extracted therefrom. It is also announced, that Dr. William Councilman, professor of pathological anatomy in the Harvard medical school, has discovered the germ that causes smallpox. He claims that the cause of smallpox is a protozoa, the lowest form of animal life, and this is responsible for the highly contagious character of the disease. Thus, we are advancing in the right direction, but there is still a wide field yet undiscovered.

**Britain in Somaliland.**

The cause of the British reverse, which occurred in Somaliland on April 17, seemed to be over confidence and rashness on the part of British officers leading native troops. In this case, a small reconnoitring force of about two hundred men was practically wiped out by the Mad Mullah and his troops. British Somaliland is on the Gulf of Aden, and was formerly a dependency of Egypt, but was declared a British protectorate in 1887. It comprises 60,000 square miles, and an unknown number of people. These are chiefly Mohammedan Somalis. Berbera, the chief town, has a population of 30,000 inhabitants. The Mullah overran Northern Somaliland in 1901, and last year when an expedition was sent against him, he retreated to the desert. On Oct. 6, however, the British main column was surprised and after desperate fighting retreated, losing 150 killed and wounded. The Mullah's force was then estimated at 15,000 and he probably has more now. The reverse of October last made it clear that a larger force must be sent against the fanatic, and it was a flying column of this larger force, under Colonel Cobbe, that was destroyed. Brigadier General Manning, in command of the British forces in Somaliland, upon receipt of the news of the disaster, immediately set out to relieve Colonel Cobbe, met and defeated the Mad Mullah's forces near Gumburru. About 2000 of the Mullah's men were killed. The British loss is not known.

**The British Post Office Banks.**

England has a flourishing system of Post Office Savings Banks. We have somewhat the same system in Canada, but the people do not patronize it as they do in England, perhaps, the reason is, because we have such a fine and complete system of banking. In England, they are building a gigantic structure in South Kensington as headquarters for this system. The building covers a little over four acres of ground, has been four years under construction, and costs about \$1,350,000. In 1861, this system of Post Office Banks was established. In 1880, provision was made for the savings of the humblest, by the introduction of slips to which unused penny postage stamps could be attached, and which, when filled with stamps representing one shilling in value, would be accepted as a deposit of that sum—this being the minimum. At the present time not far short of \$500,000 is saved by this means annually. In the same year, facilities were provided for the investment of small sums of money in Government stocks through the Post Office Savings Banks, and in 1884, a plan of life insurance and annuities was added to the ordinary business of the department. Since then other extensions to its service have been made. During the forty years of its existence, the administrative staff of the bank has increased from twenty persons to 3,062. There are no fewer than 9,000,000 depositors, and 15,000,000 deposits and 6,000,000 withdrawals are made in the year, through the 14,000 P. O. banks now in existence.

**Russia in Manchuria.**

The recent demands of Russia upon China in reference to Manchuria are the most flagrant breach of faith ever exhibited by a civilized nation, and have aroused Japan, England and the United States. A year and a half ago, Russia agreed with the other powers concerned in suppressing the Boxer uprising to withdraw her troops and retire from Manchuria, and solemnly declared, that she had no intention of acquiring an inch of territory in China or Manchuria. She also agreed with the other powers to maintain "the open door," which means that all nations shall be on the same commercial footing in the ports of China. The time has now come for her to fulfil her promises and evacuate Manchuria. But on April 23, Russia presented China with a document, and declared that no steps would be taken in the evacuation of Manchuria until it was signed by China. The terms of evacuation are as follows: First, There shall be no new treaty ports and no new foreign consulates in Manchuria. Second, The customs revenue of New Chwang shall be paid into the Russo Chinese bank and not into the Chinese customs bank. Third, No portion of Manchuria shall be alienated to another Power. Fourth, Only Russians shall be employed in an administrative capacity in Manchuria, whether military or civil. Fifth, The administration of Mongolia shall remain as it is at present, i. e., Russian. Sixth, Russia shall be allowed to string telegraph wires on all Chinese telegraph poles in Manchuria. In short, Russia demands as condition to her withdrawal, that she retain financial, commercial and military control of the country. So far China has refused to accede to these demands. Britain, the United States, and Japan, will vigorously protest against these demands. This is probably as far as the United States would go, but it is different with Great Britain and Japan. According to the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Britain is not bound to join Japan, if the latter made war on Russia. But if France or any other nation should join Russia in the war, then Britain would be bound to help Japan. If Russia insists upon her demands, it is probable that the long talked of partition of China will take place.

**The British Budget.**

Mr. Ritchie Chancellor of the Exchequer, delivered the budget in the British House of Commons on April 23. This budget is the first British peace budget for a number of years, and was in many respects cheerful reading to the English people. The most gratifying details were the reduction of four pence in the pound on the income tax, which will amount to some \$42,500,000, and the abolition of the corn tax, against which there has been much agitation in England. The abolition of the corn tax will be a blow to many Canadians, who secretly hoped that by this tax, England might be able to grant a preference to the colonies, and thus open the way for an Imperial customs union. But that is not yet, great events move slowly. The most important facts of the budget are the following: The total cost of the wars in South Africa and China has been \$1,085,000,000; the charge for the reduction of the national debt is \$35,000,000, and, if it is not augmented, the debt will be wiped out in fifty years; of the total taxation, \$326,650,000 will be raised by indirect taxation and \$301,850,000 by direct taxes; the total war debt is \$798,500,000. The estimated expenditure for 1903-1904 is \$721,655,000, a reduction of \$160,000,000 as compared with 1902; the receipts are estimated at \$873,850,000, leaving an estimated surplus of \$52,000,000. The estimates for the army and navy amount to \$310,000,000. An interesting item was the estimated receipt of \$4,685,000 for the next fiscal year on Suez canal account. Neither the sugar, coal or tea taxes are to be interfered with. Mr. Ritchie said, that one satisfactory feature of British trade for the past year had been the comparative few trade disputes and the willingness of employer and employee to come together for fair discussion and settlement.