

PROMINENT TOPICS.

The Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, K.C., M.P., has been appointed secretary for the Colonies in succession to the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain. The name is spelt "Lyttelton" not "Lyttleton" as in many papers; the Littletons are quite another family, of which Lord Hatherton is the head. The new Colonial secretary's fitness for this responsible position is being adversely criticised because he is not well known as a politician. This probably, is a qualification rather than a drawback. The administration of the Colonies demands a freshness of mind, power of initiative, sympathy with the buoyant, the youthful spirit of Colonial life and its ambitious aspirations which are not to be found in a political hack.

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Inexperienced he is not. He has been in close touch with colonial life from his childhood. This important fact has escaped all our contemporaries. Mr. Lyttelton is a son of the late Baron Lyttelton who took a deep, active interest in the settlement of New Zealand, one principal city of which bears the family name. In his work, "Ephemera" is a most interesting lecture on New Zealand, based on personal knowledge of that Colony. He was Under-Secretary of the Colonies in 1846, and held views far ahead of his time as to the wisdom of according them rights of self-government. His speech in the House of Lords, July 5, 1850, on the Australian Government Bill, and his treatise on "The Colonial Empire of Great Britain" are masterpieces of exposition regarding colonial affairs and full of historical informaton. Of Canada Lord Lyttelton said, "Canada knows and feels that it has self-government, which is as good a security as any Colony can desire." Again, "The entire control of all matters relating to the Colony itself should be left to the Legislature of the Colony, while subjects bearing on the interests of the Empire at large should be determined by Imperial authority." These statesmanlike views were uttered in 1849-50 and were repeated in after years. Mr. Lyttelton, the new secretary for the Colonies, was brought up in a Colonial atmosphere; as a boy he doubtless knew more about British Colonies from his father's teaching than the great bulk of the politicians of the day.

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Mr. Lyttelton was selected by Mr. Chamberlain to serve as chairman of the Commission to enquire into the affairs of South Africa, he also took part in the arbitration between the Government of Newfoundland and Mr. Reid. He therefore has had far more experience in Colonial affairs than his predecessor enjoyed prior to his taking office as Colonial Secretary. In nature, strength of intellect and culture Mr. Lyttelton compares favourably with any living politician. His father was one of the most erudite classical scholars of the age, and in

all other respects was an honour to the peerage and his country. We predict a brilliant career for the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton.

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American Insurance Magnates who attended the meeting of the "Western Union" at Toronto, in September last, combine to give evidence of this application of the manner in which they were welcomed and entertained by their Canadian confrères. The "Standard" of Boston in a recent issue had the following humorous allusion to the meeting:

"One of the best jokes of the recent Union meeting at Toronto, occurred during the luncheon given by the Canadian underwriters. President Chase, of the Hartford, speaking to a toast, referred to the Liverpool & London & Globe, retiring Chairman Smith, its Montreal manager, on a generous pension. He said that was a fine custom, and one that the American companies ought to follow. Turning to President Washburn, of the Home, who sat beside him, he said: "If you'll start it in New York, Brother Washburn, I'll begin it in Hartford, and then maybe we veterans will get our deserts." Mr. Washburn shrugged his shoulders and with a twinkle in his eye replied with impassive countenance: "I am not sure that I want my deserts just yet." The roar of appreciation that went up at this showed that everyone understood the lively contests the Home and its president had been going through during the meeting."

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By the bill which Mr. Prefontaine has introduced in Parliament:—

"On and after the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and four, the Montreal Harbour Commissioners shall cease to be the pilotage authority of the pilotage district of Montreal, and all the powers vested in the said Montreal Harbour Commissioners as such pilotage authority, either under the Pilotage Act and the acts amending it, or under the Montreal Harbour Commissioners Act, 1894, shall thereafter be vested in the Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

"On and after the said day, notwithstanding anything in the Pilotage Act or in the Quebec Harbour Commissioners' Act, 1899, the river Saguenay shall not be within the port of Quebec or the pilotage district of Quebec."

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October 6, 1903, will be a prominent date in the fiscal history of the British Empire, as, on that day, the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain formally, by a speech at Glasgow, opened a campaign looking towards a revolutionary change in the fiscal policy of Great Britain. Without expressing any opinion as to the wisdom, or the feasibility of his proposals we may quote Mr. Chamberlain's own statement as to his policy as regard the Colonies.