

Messenger and Visitor.

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Sir William Vanhorne and the Atlantic S. S. Service.

A speech of Sir William Vanhorne, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, made a few days ago at a banquet at which he was the guest of a number of the leading men of Quebec City, was received with much interest and has called forth a good deal of discussion in the daily press of the Dominion. Sir William's speech dealt with the Atlantic steamship service and indicated very decidedly his opinion that both in respect to the freight and the passenger service great improvement is necessary. He stated that for every bushel of Canadian wheat which is shipped to Europe by way of a Canadian port, from two to eight bushels are shipped by way of United States ports, and this Sir William contended was due principally to the inadequate character of the Canadian Atlantic freight service. The deepening of canals and other improvements to facilitate the bringing of western products to our Atlantic seaports would be of little value without a corresponding improvement in the Atlantic freight service, since already the hopper had been enlarged out of all proportion to the spout. Sir William Vanhorne's remarks respecting a fast Atlantic passenger service show that, with sufficient encouragement in the way of Government subsidies, the C. P. R. people are prepared to supply in this connection a line of steamships which would even eclipse the Atlantic liners to New York. The Canadian ports for this line would be Quebec in summer and Halifax in winter, and Sir William paints a glowing picture of what would be when this missing link in the C. P. R. system should be supplied, when the C. P. R. Company would put on a train at Euston Station, London, that would astonish the world, and sell a ticket to Hong-Kong or to Australia by way of two trans-oceanic steamship companies and one trans-continental railway, each of them superior to everything else of its kind, and all under the direction of the company of which Sir William is the business head and chief spokesman. This is magnificent, it may be said, but is it business? The answer is, it is doubtless business for Sir William Vanhorne and the C. P. R., provided the necessary subsidies are forthcoming. But another question, quite as important certainly, is,—would it be business for Canada, would it serve the best interests of the Canadian tax-payer? Sir William seems to imply that it would cost the country a million dollars a year, and such an estimate is probably not extravagant for such a service as he indicates. As to its paying the country, Sir William says it would be an immense advertisement for Canada and would pay in that way. There is doubtless something in this view of the matter, but there is a limit to what a country can afford to pay for advertising. The president of the C. P. R. can be trusted to have a care for the interests of the company which he represents and the Canadian tax-payers will have a right to expect that their interests will be carefully considered by their representatives in Parliament and in the Government.

Nicholas and Tolstoy.

The London 'Daily Mail' has published an account of a meeting between the Emperor Nicholas, of Russia, and Count Tolstoy, which may be more or less true. It is stated that, while journeying north from Livadia, the Czar sent a delicately worded message to Count Tolstoy, expressing a desire to see him. "Contrary to expectation," so the story goes, the Count accepted the Czar's invitation and appeared at the railway station in peasant's garb, presenting a marked contrast to the richly dressed entourage of the Czar. Tolstoy received a very affectionate greeting from his sovereign, who

"kissed him on the mouth and both cheeks." To this greeting Tolstoy readily responded, but when he was asked by the Czar for an opinion upon the Imperial proposal for the limitation of armaments, the Count replied that he could only believe in it when His Majesty should set the example to other nations. However when the Czar spoke of the difficulties of the problem and the necessity of securing the united aid of the great powers, the Count softened somewhat and expressed the hope that His Majesty would be able to obtain some definite results, or at any rate to formulate some workable plan at the conference. The Czar, thanking him for his good wishes, said that he would be pleased if Tolstoy could be induced to lend his genius to the solution of the question, and the Count rejoined that the Emperor might count upon his co-operation, and intimated his intention to publish a work upon the question in the near future. This is a very pretty story, but one cannot help wondering why it is, if the Czar so values Tolstoy's opinion and co-operation in matters affecting the interests of the State, that the Count is not able to secure from his gracious sovereign the merest justice for oppressed and persecuted peoples in Russia,—why, for instance, so excellent a people as the Doukhobers are said to be in whom Tolstoy is known to be deeply interested, are being driven out of Russia because of the intolerable persecution to which they are subject so long as they remain in the Czar's dominions.

Peace-Conference Programme.

What may be called a provisional programme for the Conference to which the Czar has called the nations has been issued by Count Muraviev, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The points suggested for consideration are as follows:

- First—To agree not to increase naval or military forces and the corresponding budgets for a fixed period.
- Second—To endeavor to find means of reducing the forces and budgets in the future.
- Third—To interdict the use of any new weapon or explosive of a power more destructive than now made.
- Fourth—To restrict the use of the most terrible of existing explosives, and to forbid the throwing of any explosives from balloons or similarly.
- Fifth—To forbid the employment of submarine torpedoes and similar contrivances.
- Sixth—To undertake not to construct vessels with rams.
- Seventh—To apply the Geneva convention to naval warfare.
- Eighth—To neutralize vessels saving those wrecked in naval battles.
- Ninth—To revise the declaration concerning the laws and customs of war elaborated at Brussels in 1874.
- Tenth—To accept the principle of mediation and arbitration in such cases as lend themselves thereto.

The circular re-affirms that nothing touching existing political relations shall be discussed. It will be generally recognized that, according to this outline, the results sought for are not of a chimerical character. The nations will not be asked to disarm forthwith and permit all their naval and military equipments to fall into disuse. But what seems to be hoped for is that the nations may be willing to call a halt in the mad endeavor to outdo each other in providing more and effective and expensive armaments and to adopt measures which may make wars between the nations less probable, and which shall rob them of some of their more horrible features if they shall occur.

The Doukhobers.

As has been previously noted in these columns, some thousands of people known by the name of Doukhobers or Spirit Wrestlers, are about coming to Canada to make a home for themselves in our Northwest. These people come from Russia, where it is said they have been subject to great privations and persecutions because of their religious beliefs, and particularly because of their refusal to perform military service. They appear to have a good deal in common with the English Quakers. The name Doukhober is a nickname, given them by their enemies. They call themselves "The Universal Brotherhood of Christians." They make little of outward forms and ceremonies, but emphasize love and human brotherhood and the illumination of the Spirit. Two of the men with their families have been in Canada since September, engaged in making

arrangements with the Government for the settlement of the colony. The appearance of these people gives a favorable impression. They are of sturdy physique and their faces are intelligent and otherwise not unprepossessing. Judging from their pictures appearing in the newspapers, they are not people to succumb before trifles. The first instalment of about 2,000 of these people arrived at Halifax by the S. S. Huron on Friday last. After undergoing quarantine inspection at Halifax they are to be landed at St. John and proceed immediately to the Northwest by way of the C. P. R. (Another company of 2,000 is expected a week or two later by the 'Superior'). A number of the families are to remain in Winnipeg during the winter; others at Brandon, Dauphin and Yorkton. A large number of the men will at once be sent on to the district where the colony is to be established, to cut timber for buildings and make other preparations for settlement in the spring. The lands chosen for the settlement of the Doukhobers are said to comprise about twelve townships, each six miles square, beautifully situated, and abundantly watered by running streams, with plenty of timber for fuel and building, and soil of the best quality, mainly a rich, black, vegetable loam, from one to two feet deep, resting upon pure clay of great depth. The Doukhobers are reported to be skilful agriculturalists, and wherever they have been given a chance to live they have been prosperous. They are now, however, without means, and subscriptions of money and clothing are being solicited on behalf of the new settlers.

Singing songs of thanksgiving to Almighty God, the Doukhobers on the steamship 'Huron' came into Halifax harbor on Friday afternoon, after a voyage of 29 days from Batoum. Captain Evans, of the 'Huron' reported that from Batoum to Gibraltar they had fine weather. On the Atlantic a succession of gales was experienced, and heavy seas broke over the vessel on several occasions, but little damage was sustained. The health of the immigrants during the voyage had been good for the most part. There had been ten deaths, seven of young children and three of very old people. There had been one birth and the child was named Canada. There had been also six marriages during the voyage. The officers of the ship speak well of the behaviour of the passengers. As to the appearance of the Doukhobers, a Halifax 'Chronicle' reporter writes:

"They excited the admiration of all. They are a fine looking lot of people, with honest faces and stalwart frames. Even the children—and there are many, from the little tot of a couple of years up—looked the perfect picture of health. Young people seemed to predominate. One old gentleman, with flowing beard, commanded the attention of all. He was as active as a boy and as happy as a bridegroom, though he had passed his 85th year. His history is the history of Russian tyranny. It in a measure told the story of why those people felt happy in coming to live under the Union Jack. Nine years ago his property was confiscated and he was sent into penal servitude, in the Russian galleys. One year ago he was allowed to return to Russia proper, but not to his friends, with the understanding that he would leave the country at the first opportunity. The opportunity came and the old man is now in a land of freedom with his friends."

The Doukhobers are further described as people of the purest Russian type, large and strong, men and women both being of magnificent physique. They are characterized by broad, square shoulders and heavy limbs, and a massive build generally. Their features are prominent, but refined, and bear the marks of living that is free from vice of any kind. The men wear mustaches but do not let a beard grow. Their hair is usually quite short, with the exception of a little tuft which they allow to grow over the forehead, which is broad and open. The most striking characteristic of all is the bright, kindly sparkle of their eyes, which gives a winning expression to the whole face and quickly wins confidence in their character. All their habits demonstrate that they are possessed of keen minds, which, however, by reason of their persecutions and the nature of their occupation, they have not been able to develop in a way that gives a proper idea to their mental ability. They are, however, a class of people that is rarely found among immigrants—industrious, frugal, clean and moral in a high degree, and eminently desirable in every way.

The immigrants are in charge of Leopold Zubeylitzky, who represents Count Tolstoy, the great Russian author and philanthropist, who has interested himself in the oppressed Doukhobers and their immigration to Canada. Arrangements have been made by a number of benevolent ladies in St. John by which the Doukhober children are each to receive before starting on their western journey a parcel containing an orange, an apple, some sweet biscuits and candy.