

The Dominion Illustrated.

\$4.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

THE SABISTON LITHOGRAPHIC AND PUBLISHING CO

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The Gazette Building, Montreal.

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4 King-street, East, Toronto, Ont.

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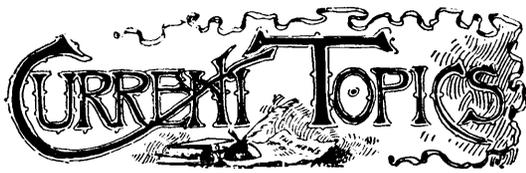
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"THE EDITOR, DOMINION ILLUSTRATED."

19th SEPTEMBER, 1891.



The Political Muddle.

It is evident to everyone that a strong hand and decisive action is now essential from the supreme power in the State. The general upheaval and ferment in the Government and its departments, and in our less brilliant constellation at Quebec, has been steadily growing, and has now reached a point that demands the intervention of the Crown. In the former, we see the session of Parliament being spun out beyond all reason, its time taken up largely with accusations and counter charges of bribery and corruption—honourable members hurling across the floor epithets and taunts which remind one more of a Republican Congress than a British House of Parliament; we see the leadership in the Commons a divided and unsettled question, the First Minister without any voice or say whatever in the popular Chamber. But these are minor points compared to the unhealthy state of certain of the Departments, and to the gross negligence—if nothing worse—of Ministers of the Crown, who have, by their apparent ignorance of outrageous bribery going on almost under their own eyes, given ample proof of their incapacity for their positions. The thing is so palpably unfair to their colleagues, that we wonder at any Minister whose department has shown such signs of disorganization not stepping down and out as soon as he saw how his negligence is not only doing irreparable damage to the Ministry, but also to the whole party to which he and they belong.

Quebec Morality.

In the Province of Quebec we see the Ministry found guilty at the bar of public opinion of another case of malversation; one that is really only a rider to previous affairs of a similar nature, but which has attracted a far greater degree of public attention from its having been investigated before the Dominion Parliament instead of being confined to the Quebec Star Chamber. As might have been expected, serious friction has arisen between the Ministry and the Lieutenant-Governor, who is naturally hurt deeply at the public exhibition of his advisers' shortcomings, and whose constitutional course is beset with difficulty. We see the confidential agent and financial go-between of the

Ministry skipping off to Europe when wanted here, and not troubling himself to return or to offer any reply or excuse even when his name is bandied around the country with every expression of contempt. Instead of the Ministry—who represent the public and whose salaries are paid out of the public funds—taking immediate steps to satisfy their constituents of their innocence of the alleged charges, we find them treating the whole matter in an easy-going, contemptuous way, and standing on Provincial dignity as to the right of the Federal House to criticise their conduct. The accusations of misapplying public funds are bad enough, but what appears the most objectionable feature of the business is the calm and bland manner in which the parties implicated treat the matter.

Vice-Regal Action.

Personal action on the part of the Governor-General in both the Ottawa and Quebec muddles would, we think, be welcomed by all. While ordinary cases demand ordinary procedure, a time when the honour of Canada is besmirched from both without and within—when, with all the added exaggeration that distance and a foreign cable service can lend, the leading papers of Britain hold up their hands in horror at the exhibitions of bribery and incapacity shown in two great Departments in our public service, and when almost every day brings out fresh evidence of mismanagement, it is time for His Excellency, as the Queen's representative, to personally see that the men whose mismanagement has brought this disgrace on the country are dropped from the number of his advisers, without waiting for them to resign or to be ignominiously defeated at the polls by an indignant community. In the Provincial case, when action on the part of the Lieutenant-Governor is hampered by the LETELLIER precedent, it would, we think, be not in excess of LORD STANLEY'S power to take the law in his own hands and have the matter sifted by a Royal commission whose members be chosen from the Supreme Court, not from politicians of either party. The cost of Provincial rule in Canada is becoming far too great a tax; and when it develops scandals that seriously damage the reputation of the country, people may well ask themselves if local legislation could not be effected by less arrogant and expensive bodies than our Provincial Parliaments as now constituted.

Since the foregoing was written, LIEUT.-GOVERNOR ANGERS' letter to HON. MR. MERCIER has been made public; and the proposals therein made, that three judges of the Quebec Bench should form the Royal Commission, is a perfectly fair one. Many will, however, still think that the ruling of a tribunal drawn from the highest judicial body in the Dominion would carry even greater weight on account of its absolute freedom from any sectional or Provincial prejudice.

The Census.

It is impossible for every Canadian not to feel deeply pained at the official result of the recent census; and the more the figures are looked into, the more apparent does it become that some huge blunder has been made, either in the enumeration of 1881 or that just concluded. With the natural increase to the population, amounting to half a million, and with an immigration of twice that figure,—both of which items can be fairly counted in,—the figures show us to be exactly one million short of what they should be. Every department of industry throughout Canada shows a marked increase; large areas of new land have been oc-

cupied by actual settlers; bank deposits, farm produce, imports and exports, in fact all lines that denote material prosperity, show during the past ten years a vast increase over the figures for the previous decade; and yet we appear to have lost a round million of population. SIR RICHARD CARR-WRIGHT claims that the loss has been very much greater than this figure, so we think that one million is a moderate and fair estimate. Now does it seem probable that one hundred thousand persons can slip out of the country each year—over eight thousand each month, year in and year out for a whole decade, without such an exodus being apparent to every voter and every reasonable soul in the Dominion? It is too much to ask us to believe. It is altogether probable from facts which have been publicly stated, that the figures stated by the census returns of 1881 were very largely in excess of the actual population of Canada at that time; and also that the enumeration made this year errs in the other direction to no small degree. Within the past month a large number of unsolicited contributions to the press all through the country have given many instances of persons not called on by the officials; and for every such known case there must be hundreds which have not come to light. The case of St. John, N.B. is a fair sample. All the various civic statistics show a considerable increase since 1881, and yet the census gives a falling-off of 2,174; it seems beyond denial either that the figures taken there ten years ago were far too high, or that this year many names have been overlooked. It would be a valuable move on the part of the Government to ascertain from each county council or other municipal body in Canada, by means of a circular, its views as to the extent of the exodus of its people to the United States (if such existed) and to find out the reasons that as a general rule induced the exiles to leave Canada. Such would constitute a valuable expression of opinion from practical men, and would carry far greater weight than any amount of Parliamentary oratory.

The Toronto Highland Corps.

It is satisfactory to learn that all necessary details in connection with the organization of the Toronto Highland Regiment are being rapidly arranged, and in the supplementary estimates just submitted to Parliament \$5,000 is allotted for the initial expense of the new corps. We understand that within a very few weeks the regiment will be formally gazetted into the service. Possibly the official number and name have been already definitely arranged; and we trust the mistake will not be committed of numbering the corps at the end of the Militia List, while two blanks occur in the numerical chain. The old 4th and 48th battalions are extinct and their places have not been filled; far better would it be to give one of these numbers to the new regiment than to continue the list by numbering it the 97th,—the 96th being now the highest number on our roll. By gazetting it as the 48th one of the gaps would be filled, and no question of seniority could arise at any time between the new corps and the 10th Grenadiers, as might happen were it numbered the 4th. Precedents for this step are easily found, and we can call to mind at least two; the old 21st and 43rd battalions having been reduced, their numbers were granted to two new corps, the first of which represented a widely different district. Any Canadian might be proud to be called the 48th, in view of the high standing and distinguished foreign ser-