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WEDNESDAY, JULY 1.

CURRENT COMMENT.

Don't Prophesy Until you know. The late general election has been full of surprises. The Liberals themselves, sanguine though they undoubtedly were, did not dare to hope for so large a majority, they expected more from Ontario than from Quebec and most of all from Manitoba. The event has upset all their calculations. Small wonder, then, if the New York Sun, their earnest supporter, and generally so well informed, uttered the following forecast, which, absurd as it now looks, contains some grains of truth. This is the conclusion of one of the Sun's editorials on the 21st inst.:

It looks, consequently, as if the outcome of Tuesday's election would be a signal triumph for the Conservatives in the province of Quebec, and as if the Liberals and McCarthyites, between them, would secure a great majority of the seats allotted to Ontario, Manitoba, of course, will be carried by the Liberals. Whether the Conservatives will emerge from the whole contest with strength enough to keep their promise of enforcing the claims of the Manitoba Catholics is very doubtful; but, if they are beaten, it will be by a heterogeneous body, united upon nothing but the purpose of upsetting the coercion programme. Even if the McCarthyites should be represented in a coalition Cabinet, pledged to sustain the right of the Protestant majority in Manitoba to settle its own school question, they could scarcely be relied upon to favor the reciprocity scheme, which Mr. LAURIER would try to force to the front.

Broomerang Stump Oratory.

Mr. LaRiviere's enemies helped him to an easy victory. One of the parishes in Southern Manitoba was largely adverse to him, when a Winnipeg orator appeared in the bailiwick and by his violent abuse of the Catholic clergy disgusted all the malcontents and turned them into supporters of Mr. LaRiviere. Similar conversions through disgust at bigotry are reported from various parts of the Province. In fact, Mr. Dalton McCarthy's entire campaign is, in a great measure, responsible for the reversion of feeling throughout Manitoba and for the unexpected adherence of the country to Conservative principles. One result of the strife of tongues has been an awakened understanding of the school question by a multitude of intelligent electors who needed the stimulus of passionate reviling to turn them, by contrast, into sober, reflecting students of a subject they had hitherto neglected to sift for themselves.

The Country Fairly Prosperous.

Both Government and newspaper reports show that the prospects of a plentiful harvest are more than good. In spite of late seeding, the frequent showers and hot spells have brought the crops into a condition of progress at least as satisfactory as it was last year on the 1st of July. With respect to last year's results, the Annual Report of

the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in the excellent address of the General Manager, states the case with healthy optimism: "When we turn to Manitoba," says Mr. Walker, "we realize the truth of what we have just said—that it is easier to bear low prices than a bad harvest. Many were ready to say that at the current prices for grain and cattle the farmers in the North-west could not prosper; but the past year has shown conclusively that this is not true. The grain crop of 1895 in the North-west was about 61,000,000 bushels, of which about 33,000,000 bushels was wheat, against a total grain crop of 32,000,000 bushels in the preceding year, of which 17,000,000 was wheat. Although there were the usual troubles from frost, exposure after cutting, etc., two-thirds of the wheat graded No. 1, 2 and 3 hard. Prices were such as would have disheartened anyone ten years ago; but the large yield, almost 30 bushels to the acre on the average, compensated for this. The enormous crop of oats and barley, 28,000,000 bushels, against 15,000,000 bushels for the preceding year, has as yet done little for the farmers, prices being so low and freight rates so prohibitive that there is little use at the moment for the crop except to feed stock at home. The cattle trade of the North-west continues to grow very rapidly. The first car-load of cattle was shipped out of Manitoba only in 1890, yet the export this year has been about 50,000 cattle, 10,000 hogs, 15,000 sheep and 400 horses. The totals are not large, of course, as yet; but the gain over the preceding year is almost 100 per cent. in cattle and 500 per cent. in sheep. The result of all this bounty on the part of Nature is that debts were paid to a gratifying extent, and the record of failures is considerably less than for the previous year. As the merchants have exercised for the past two years unusual care in granting credit, the country has materially advanced, and the proportions of farmers out of debt has perceptibly increased, while the load has been much lightened to almost all who are in debt." In all this there is much cause for thankfulness, not to Nature (with a big n), but to Our Father in heaven. The most hopeful sign is the tendency to eschew or pay off debts. Hitherto the curse of this Western country has been the ease with which farmers and others saddle themselves with obligation for the future and the utter callousness with which too many persons leave their just debts unpaid.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER.

The daily papers report that on being interviewed after it was definitely known that the elections had gone against his government, Sir Charles Tupper stated that when Mr. Laurier should take steps to remedy the injustice under which the Catholic minority of Manitoba are now suffering, he would not be hampered by factious opposition, and further that if the new power should start by the principles of the trade policy under which the Dominion has been built; and which must be maintained if Canada is to become one of the great nations of the earth, they need not fear any such opposition from him as the Conservative party had been met with during the seventeen years of their regime.

We commend this noble deliverance to the careful consideration of all our readers as we are of opinion that it fully bears out the high estimate we have ourselves formed of the statesman who gave utterance to it. It must be remembered, that these words were spoken just after a most exciting political contest and when the speaker might reasonably have been expected to be keenly feeling the reverse his party had met with. The most critical opponent of Sir Charles Tupper will not be able to find the slightest trace of bitterness in what he is here reported to have said, but on the other hand every one must admit that in thus expressing himself he has given once more evidence that he is a true, constitutional, and patriotic statesman whose sole desire is, whether in or out of office, to advance to the best of his ability the interests of his beloved

country. Sir Charles Tupper has made it clear that he has no hard feeling towards Quebec for having given a verdict against him, that he is no mere politician whose only aim would be to gain office and the emoluments to be derived therefrom, but that he is a true Canadian, a great patriot, who will be ready to devote his acknowledged ability and his vast experience to assist in the development and the progress of that great confederation of which he was one of the Fathers and of which, he is so proud. This is the opinion we formed of Sir Charles Tupper from the moment of his re-entry to the public life of Canada, an opinion which was confirmed and strengthened when we heard him deliver his great speech which opened the campaign in Winnipeg, but nothing that we have ever heard or read of him has more convinced us that we were right in the estimate we had formed than the noble way in which he accepted defeat and promised to aid and assist his successor in the Premiership of the Dominion in carrying to a successful issue such legislation as is absolutely necessary to make this a happy, united and prosperous country. We are proud of Canada's "Grand Old Man": prouder of him in his hour of defeat than ever we were before—and this is saying a great deal, whilst on the other hand words could not be found in the English language which would express the contempt we feel for those miserable scribblers and others who in the exultation caused by their unexpected triumph bark like curs at his heels and with jeers and gibes and dirty insinuations seek to disparage the services and ability, and tarnish the name of one of Canada's noblest sons. We trust that Sir Charles Tupper may long be spared to assist in shaping the destinies of our grand Dominion. Such men as he are few and far between, and although his party has been beaten at the polls we do not hesitate to say that the great fight he made against tremendous odds and the patriotic stand he has taken in his hour of defeat have given him a place in the estimation of the people of the country as high, if not higher than that held by any Canadian statesman.

MR. LAURIER.

We have often stated in these columns that we are not political partisans, but that, as the organ of the Catholics in this country and as patriotic Canadians, our sole desire is to aid those who in our opinion give the strongest proof of their earnestness in safe-guarding our liberties and in maintaining the provisions of the constitutional government under which we live. Acting on this principle we during the last campaign advocated the cause of the Conservative party because we believed they had manifested an earnest desire to give the Catholics of Manitoba the relief they are entitled to under the constitution, and we felt that in opposing their efforts in this direction Mr. Laurier and his followers were not only doing us an injustice but really, for a time at least, actually setting aside the constitution. The elections have been held and mainly through the support given him by the Catholic Province of Quebec Mr. Laurier has been returned to power and will shortly be in control of the government. We do not take back anything we have said during the course of the campaign—there is no reason why we should because we have throughout been plain and above-board, and, without any bitterness, have simply advised our readers to do that which we thought it was right for them to do, but at the same time it will not be considered inconsistent if we now announce that without any abatement of our regard for Sir Charles Tupper and his policy we are prepared to give Mr. Laurier and his followers credit for the very best intentions in their past actions and to believe that now they are in power their sole desire will be to promote the welfare of the country and to protect and cherish the rights and liberties of every section of the community. We of course still regret that Mr. Laurier did not give to Sir Charles Tupper that assistance in passing the Remedial Bill which Sir Charles has

promised he will give to his successor in whatever may be now introduced to remedy our grievances. We yet believe that the Remedial Bill would have been a just settlement under the then existing circumstances, and that if it had been passed we should now be enjoying a fair and just school law.

We are prepared, however, to let bygones be by-gones and to accept Mr. Laurier's explanations of the course which he adopted. We believe that whatever else happens under Mr. Laurier's rule our wrongs will be righted—for he will himself naturally wish to aid his co-religionists in this country, he is pledged to Quebec to do us justice, and Manitoba itself has virtually declared for us. We do not, of course know what method he will adopt, but so far as we can we shall give him loyal support, as we did the present government, in anything he inaugurates which may seem to us to shew an earnest desire on his part to restore our rights and privileges under the constitution to educate our children in accordance with the dictates of our consciences.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

Many causes might be assigned for the defeat of the Conservative party. First comes the natural wish for a change after the monotonous rule of one party during eighteen years; the popular feeling gradually grows into an unreasoning clamor that the "outs" must have their innings. A second factor might be the prevailing hard times; the unreflecting multitude, unaware that pretty much the same condition exists all over the world, are inclined to attribute it to the party in power and to its protective policy, which now more than ever, with McKinley as a probable President of the United States, is a measure of necessary self-defence. A third and very real cause of the Liberal victory is that the Liberals were better organized and more energetic. They were starved into valiant effort. They were hungry for place and power. The impecunious workman who "beats" his way home to see his wife before she dies has a thousand ways of outwitting trainmen who are merely interested in keeping their situations. So Mr. Laurier was playing his last card; had he failed this time after so many previous failures, he would have been politically dead for ever and aye.

A fourth cause, akin to the preceding, of which it is a special manifestation, is the use the Liberals made of the Bishops' collective charge. Sir Charles Tupper's adversaries eagerly seized on this wisely impartial document and claimed that they would do all that it required, whereas, said they, the Conservatives never really intended to pass a Remedial Act and would find some excuse to drop the unpleasant business, if they returned to power. The promises made by Liberal candidates to Catholic electors of Quebec were definite and plausible. They pointed out that Mr. Laurier was in a much better position than Sir Charles to bring Mr. Greenway to see the error of his ways and mend them, that, being better able to act effectively, the Liberal chief would find it his best interest to do so, and therefore that the Liberal party presented the strongest guarantee of Remedial action. Beyond a doubt, this was one of the most potent proximate causes of the Conservative Waterloo. And so well did it work that some of the defeated party, in the bitterness of so unexpected a disaster, are now saying that the recent election was a "put-up job" between the Bishops and Mr. Laurier. For anyone who remembers the latter's recent revolt in the House of Commons against episcopal interference such a saying is too absurd to need refutation; but it demonstrates, at least, how skilful was the Liberal use of the famous "mandement."

Whatever may have been the practical effect of the foregoing causes, there is a fifth one mightier than all the others, and that is the wretched bungle which the Conservative party made of the school question during six long years. When Sir Charles Tupper was called to the rescue of a dying cause, his heroic

efforts were all in vain. Had he been called eighteen months ago, he might have saved the sinking ship. But the weight of six years of colossal blundering on the school question made it go down like lead before the marshalled hosts of the air. Not all the solemn promises of Sir Charles Tupper could drive that stubborn fact out of the clear minds of the Quebec electorate. Ontario and all the Protestant provinces might be in the dark as to the cruel wrongs inflicted on the Manitoba minority; but Quebec was well informed, Quebec knew that nothing, absolutely nothing had been done (though much had been promised) to redress a grievance branded as such by the highest court in the empire. Not all the protestations of fervid Conservative Catholics could blot that fact from out the vision of a Catholic and therefore common-sense province. It stared them in the face at every turn, it cried out against every promise uttered by those who had done nothing. Eventually, harped upon as it was incessantly by eager opponents, it turned the scale and outweighed all other considerations.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea"

is Mr. Laurier "now afloat, and he must take the current in which he serves or lose his ventures." He has, indeed, a splendid chance. Backed by a great Quebec majority solemnly pledged to right our wrongs, strengthened by Sir Charles Tupper's noble declaration of loyal support on the school question, he holds in the hollow of his hand the key that can unlock our gyves. The majority of the province whose minority he wishes to deliver from bondage is now at last won over to a sense of fair play. Its verdict, like the Privy Council's second decision, practically reversing a previous verdict, is now in favor of separate schools. Nor will the Catholic minority stand in Mr. Laurier's way, provided of course, he do his duty. The Catholics of this province have nobly stood by their guns. They have proved conclusively that they are of one mind with their priests. Still better informed than their Quebec Liberal sympathizers, they refused to throw in their lot with a party that has treated them so shamelessly here. But now they are willing, under the altered circumstances, to let Mr. Laurier do his best. They wish him, however, distinctly to understand that they will accept no sop, no half measure such as Mr. Greenway offered to the commissioners. What they insist upon is a final and lasting restoration of separate schools. If he does not secure to them this indispensable exercise of their acknowledged rights, his tenure of office will be uncomfortably short, and his party will soon return to those chilling shades from which they have so recently emerged.

ELECTION VOTES.

One of the noticeable features of the election was the defeat in Montreal Centre of Mr. James McShane, who despite his great personal popularity, has thus been punished by his Irish Catholic constituents for his vote against the second reading of the Remedial Bill. He was the only Irish Catholic member of the late House who voted against the Bill. The full returns of the elections point to the fact that on the whole the Irish and German Catholics of the East supported those candidates who being members of the old House voted for the Remedial Bill, and without regard to their party affiliations opposed those who voted against the measure.

Smarting under their defeat the supporters of Mr. Martin threatened to take proceedings to annul the election and unseat the Hon. Hugh John Macdonald. We fancy, however, these threats will come to nothing and that Mr. Macdonald will sit in the next parliament as the member for Winnipeg.

Mr. Lariviere's opponent in Provencher just managed to save his deposit. Had he polled forty votes less