

The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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Register of the Week.

In Canadian politics, the most important event of the week was Hon. Mr. Foster's speech on the Budget on Feb. 14. The actual receipts for 1891-92 were given at \$86,921,871. The receipts from customs alone were \$20,501,059, being a decrease of \$2,898,241 from the previous year. This decrease is mainly owing to the reduction of the duties on sugar, which alone has lessened the receipts by over \$8,000,000. Excise shows an increase of a little over \$1,000,000. This, with a slight gain in miscellaneous receipts, shows a loss from last year of \$1,687,489.

The expenditure on consolidated fund was \$86,765,894, an increase over last year, which the Finance Minister accounts for by the extra charges of the long session. On capital account, particularly in subsidies to railways, the expenditure shows a large decrease as compared with the preceding year. In spite of this, however, principally on account of the loss of receipts on account of the abatement of the duty on sugar, the Government was obliged to float a loan in England, and the national debt was increased by \$8,922,408, making the rather enormous sum of \$241,181,000 on the debit side of the country's books. A large part of this increase Mr. Foster explains away. The North Shore railway bonds, which he claims, were never a real asset, have been cancelled, and putting loans on the market at a low rate of interest has naturally forced their value below par. So far in the present fiscal year the receipts have been greater, and the expenditure less than during the same months of last year, but the expenditure will be greatly increased in the next half year by improvements in the quarantine system and work on the canals.

The statistics concerning our internal trade are at present rather unsatisfactory but Mr. Foster argues increased trade from the gain in our freight receipts on the railways of more than \$8,500,000. In foreign trades our business with the United States declined \$2,000,000 but on the other hand it increased with Great Britain by \$15,000,000, while trade with Germany, the West Indies, and the East increased greatly. The cattle trade with Great Britain suffered largely on account of their restrictions, but a large gain is shown in cheese, butter, bacon, fruit, and on account of exceptional conditions, oats. From his figures, the Minister argues continued prosperity for the country under the present financial system, particularly with reference to exports.

But the interest in this important part of his speech was overshadowed by the conclusion, when he announced

the intention of the Government regarding tariff reform. Reverting to the widespread interest in the merits of a protective policy which had been awakened by the recent elections in the United States, and the continued low prices of farm produce, he declared the willingness of his party to consider any just grievances that might be incidentally caused by the working of the present system. He could not see in free trade or unrestricted reciprocity any solution of the problems confronting them, as the one would lead to direct taxation, and the other to a loss of autonomy, at least in trade matters. Among the policies left to them were a partial reciprocity, if such could be arranged to mutual advantage, preferential trade with England, to which, if practicable the Government stands pledged, or a general revision of the tariff with the intention of equalizing the burden as much as possible, and supplying funds for carrying on the Government of the country. To this end, a committee consisting of the honourable gentleman himself and Messrs. Bowell, Wood, and Wallace will before next session find out the ideas of those interested in the question and report to the House a scheme of tariff reform. The Minister intimated his intention of reducing the duty on binder twine from 25 per cent. to 12½ per cent., of lessening restrictions on American coal oil, and a probability of restoring the duty on logs. Altogether the speech was interesting, and every Canadian will await with some anxiety the result of the investigations of the committee. The changes, judging from the tenor of the Minister's remarks, will not probably be drastic, but it is well some effort is being made to improve the financial position of the country.

On Thursday a delegation waited on the Premier to petition the Government to disallow an act of the Nova Scotia Government giving a monopoly of the mines of Cape Breton to the Whitney syndicate for a period of 99 years. The reason given for disallowance was that it would injure Imperial interests. The mines had already been leased by a company for a term of 20 years renewable at will, but the company was bound by certain restrictions concerning the prosecution of the work, etc. The present company, which is composed of American capitalists, have leased the mines at a royalty of 10c. instead of 7½c. a ton, but without any of the restrictions imposed on the former lease. Dr. Cameron, of Inverness, and Mr. Weldon of Albert attacked the measure on the grounds that it might interfere with the British fleet coaling up in war time, that it tended to introducing the Reading Company combine into Canada, and that it was unfair to the other provinces to place the output of so many mines under

the control of one firm. Mr. McKean, the former lessee of the mine, defended the rights of the Whitney men in particular, and monopolies in general, in a caustic speech. He contended that there were numerous other mines in the Province to secure against a combine, and further that the question being a purely provincial matter, should not be treated from Ottawa. The Premier in replying, said that the Government would take no step in the matter until it had obtained the opinion of the Provincial Governments on the propriety and advisability of disallowance. He intimated in reply to a question from Mr. McNeill, that it was doubtful whether the Government could interfere in the question.

On Sunday, Jan. 22nd, there took place in the Hall of the Canonization of the Vatican over the vestibule of the Basilica of St. Peter, the solemn ceremony of the beatification of a venerable servant of God, Francis Marie Bianchi, a religious belonging to the Barnabites. The hall beautifully illuminated with thousands of wax candles, was further adorned with paintings descriptive of miracles wrought through the intervention of Blessed Francis. Amongst those who had special places in the chapel were some grand nephews of the newly beatified servant of God. An immense congregation were present at the ceremony, as also in the afternoon when the Holy Father entered the Hall and spent some time in prayer before the reliquary and image of the Beatified Francis-Marie Bianchi. The throng seems to have been so great and enthusiastic that it was almost impossible to keep the people from crowding right upon the Holy Father.

The British House of Commons has been the scene of many an historic event; the platform of some of the greatest bursts of oratory the world has ever heard, and on its arena liberty's noblest champions have fought the fight of freedom, justice and autonomy. But there have been few scenes in that historic chamber like that which took place a week ago last Monday, when the Rt. Hon. Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. It was the death knell to seven hundred years of tyranny on the one hand and justifiable animosity on the other. Many speeches have been delivered in that assembly—Mr. Gladstone himself has delivered several more burning with eloquence, but none ever sounded forth with such hope in its rounded periods, and such heavenly rhythm of peace and good will as fell from the lips of the old man eloquent in that speech of two hours. It was not the arraignment of England as Edmund Burke arraigned Warren Hastings for days before the

nation, nor was it the quick, fervid Pitt asserting the rights of Americans, nor the still more fiery retort of Shiel in his reply to Lord Lyndhurst when he called the Irish aliens. It was the calm explanation of a veteran premier placing clearly and equitably before the House the greatest measure it had ever deliberated upon. Its importance is derived from the man who introduced it as well as from its far-reaching consequences, for it will ever rest as a wreath of immortal glory upon the brow of William Ewart Gladstone even though he should not live to see its consummation.

The following despatch describes the actual introduction of the Home Rule Bill:

Mr. Gladstone usually leaves the house of Commons about 7 o'clock, and does not return for the night session. On Saturday morning last he waited in his seat till 1 o'clock in order to go through the form of introducing, with his own hands, the home rule bill. It was a scene destined to become historic. When the debate ended and formal leave was given to introduce the bill, Mr. Gladstone rose from his place and went to the bar at the end of the house. At the same moment all the Gladstonians and the Irish members of both sections jumped up as one man and as the venerable statesman advanced to the table with the bill in his hand to present it to the clerk, they greeted him with tremendous cheers, waving their hats above their heads. Mr. Balfour had left the house, but Mr. Chamberlain was still there and looked upon the significant enthusiasm with a twitching face. The members of the Irish party were in exceptional spirits, because earlier in the evening Edward Blake, the Canadian statesman, had shown by his reply to Mr. Chamberlain that he takes rank as one of the very ablest and most skillful debaters in the house. His speech was an instant and overwhelming success. Mr. Gladstone said afterwards that it was one of the very greatest debating speeches he had ever heard.

The Liberals have gained an important victory at Hexham, Northumberland, where Mr. MacInnes, Liberal has been elected by a vote of 4,805 to 4,358 for Nathaniel George Clayton, Conservative. MacInnes represented Hexham in the late parliament. In the general election he was opposed by Mr. Clayton, who is the leader of the Conservative party in Northumberland. Clayton was elected by a vote of 4,092 to 4,010 for MacInnes. A petition was lodged against Clayton charging that corrupt practices had been used in his behalf. He was unseated, and the Liberals have now gained the constituency.

Jeremiah Jordan, McCarthyite candidate in South Meath, was elected on Feb. 17th by a vote of 2,707 to 2,639 for J. J. Walton, Parnellite. Jordan takes the seat from which Patrick Fullam, anti Parnellite was displaced for clerical intimidation. The vote for Fullam in the general election was 2,212 to 2,129 for Dalton, Parnellite.

Amongst those who have already spoken upon the Bill is Lord Randolph Churchill, after a silence of two years. His admirers were in hope and expectation that he would supplant Balfour; but his health was entirely unequal to the struggle. Intellectually and as a politician Lord Randolph is Balfour's superior, but physically he is broken down. It is not likely that we shall hear much more from this erratic yet clever young statesman who a few years ago gave bright promise of oratorical and political talent.