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All articles, contributions, and letters on matter pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Is not a city council just as truly bound in honour to respect and carry out the engagements of its predecessor as a national government? If so, it is not easy to see how the Toronto Council can escape the guilt and stigma of a violation of good faith, if it persists in reducing Engineer Keating's salary by \$1,000, or any other amount, knowing that he resigned his position in another city to come to Toronto, on the distinct understanding and promise that his salary should not be smaller than that he was giving up. Is the city really in such financial straits that it cannot keep faith with its faithful servants? If so, would it not be more straightforward for it to go into liquidation at once? It is quite probable that some of its officials may

be receiving salaries which would bear reducing, after fair notice. It is likely that there are some unnecessary officials whose services could be dispensed with, also after ample notice. But with regard to all the small economies which tend either to increase the number of the unemployed, or to curtail the amount of necessary or useful employment, we submit that the present is the wrong time for heroic measures. If the taxes are somewhat heavy, they fall, for the most part, upon those who are able to pay them, and consequently have simply the effect of distributing a little more evenly the pressure of hard times, surely a just and desirable result. But, above all things, let the citizens see to it that those who act for them in their municipal capacity do nothing in their name which falls below a high standard of honourable dealing.

The second reading of the Commercial Treaty with Russia in the German Reichstag, on Monday last, was an event of great and probably far-reaching political importance. It involves a stronger pledge of continued peace for Europe than the loudest protestations could give. The sanctioning of it by the Czar is a most significant hint to France that no defensive alliance with her against Germany is at present possible. It is interesting to note that the German Emperor, with his characteristic outspokenness, does not hesitate to speak of the Treaty as a part of "his policy for preserving peace" as well as for furthering the general prosperity. It is true that the bearing of the Treaty upon the relations between Russia and Austria is not so clear. Were it not that the Czar has, seemingly, a real aversion to war, he might be suspected of having a deep ulterior design, the first step towards the accomplishment of which would be the dissolution of the Triple Alliance, thereby freeing Germany from obligation to go to the support of Austria in case of difficulty between her and Russia. The immediate significance of the Treaty is, however, the powerful check it puts upon the revengeful ardour of France, and it cannot be denied that France is at present the only nation ready to play the part of firebrand in Europe. The chagrin of the French will hardly be lessened by the suspicion that this rebuff, for it almost amounts to that, may have been partly caused by the unwise extravagance of delight they displayed at the visit of the Russian fleet last year. That reception was altogether too effusive to be genuinely unselfish, and no doubt the Russian Government was shrewd enough to read its deeper meaning.

As among those who regard Independence as the worthiest goal of Canadian national ambition, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that such advocates as Mr. Mercier and ex-Governor Royal are doing much to postpone the consummation indefinitely, or render it impossible. Their ideas of independence, including, as they evidently do, a tightening rather than a loosening of the bands which now hold a large part of the population in material, intellectual, and moral unprogressiveness, would be a retrograde rather than an advance movement. No independence which does not bring with it less of artificial restriction, fuller national freedom, and more complete unity, can ever be acceptable to the English-speaking advocates of independence. Quebec must, of course, share fully in this freedom, and have every scope for development along the lines which are most congenial to the genius of her own people, but every other province must have it in equal measure. More than that, the Canadian nation must be built on Anglo-Saxon, not on French lines, it being, of course, one of the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon civilization that full liberty of conscience, of thought, and of speech, shall be enjoyed by all citizens, without regard to race, colour, or religion. It is evident, therefore, that an independence sought, as a means of preventing the free development of the newer provinces, or of restricting any in the enjoyment of the fullest measure of self-government in local matters, can never meet the views of the majority, or become a reality in Canada. The genius of the English-speaking majority, and we believe also of the majority of French-Canadians, if they would but speak their minds, forbids.

Relief of evicted tenants, an amended registration bill, abolition of plural voting, disestablishment of the church in Wales, a local option bill, a bill for promoting conciliation in labour disputes, and two or three other reform measures, make up a truly Radical programme for the new session of the British Parliament. It is seldom that so short a Speech from the Throne foreshadows so much legislation of an advanced kind. This programme, taken in connection with Lord Rosebery's speech to his colleagues at the Foreign Office, must have had a reassuring effect upon those who feared that hereditary instincts and influences might stand in the way of the new Premier's progressiveness. Home Rule, not being on