

Prominent Topics.

Montreal's Revenue. In the last issue of THE CHRONICLE, we drew attention to the growth of Montreal, and pointed out that the revenue was going ahead by leaps and bounds. The revenue to-day should be amply sufficient to keep the streets clean and for similar purposes. It should be kept in mind that permanent works, such as new streets, drains and water pipes, are all paid for out of the loan funds. This talk about Montreal being hard up is not right, and is to be deprecated because it has a tendency to more or less injure our credit.

The Duke of Connaught. H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught has arrived home, after opening the first South African Parliament. As THE CHRONICLE predicted, it is now fairly evident that it will be impossible for His Royal Highness to be appointed Governor-General of Canada. Few people recognize the greatness of the demands upon the royal family, in connection with social, public and charitable functions in the United Kingdom. It is manifestly impossible that the King can attend them all, in addition to attending to all the affairs of the State. The Duke is now the only prince available to represent His Majesty on these occasions, and for some years to come it is unlikely that he can be spared for colonial service.

Dual Language Bill. On New Year's Day, the Dual Language Bill passed by the Quebec Legislature, will nominally come into operation. The Act provides that all railways doing business in the province, shall print all their passenger tickets, baggage checks, way-bills, bills of lading, telegraph forms and other literature issued by them in both French and English. The obligation is an onerous one, and the companies will ignore the law, as *ultra vires*. The government can safely rely upon it, that if this sort of thing were really necessary for the railway business, the companies would do their printing in Italian, Esperanto, or any other language. One thing legislatures should studiously avoid is grandmotherly legislation, unwarrantably interfering with commercial affairs. The cost of the innovation would be so great, that it will pay the companies to fight it to the court of last resort, and there can be little doubt as to the result. The law would compel the use of two languages on the stationery of the companies, which do business in Quebec, not only in the province, but in the other provinces of the Dominion, because it is a poor return ticket that won't work both ways. Nobody suffers under the present system, and none of the Quebec babies have been crying for the change. The Act is simply a con-

cession to somebody who wanted to make trifling political capital and did not mind doing it at the enormous expense of the railway companies.

Street Cleaning. The Board of Control proposes to start a new civic department—the Department of Street Cleaning. By all means let us have clean streets, if we have to have two new departments. There is an immense amount of sickness in Montreal to-day, which is almost certainly due to dirty streets at the commencement of the winter, and much of it is sickness of a serious type. The frost came before the snow and the streets were covered with germ-laden dust, at a time when it was impossible to do any street-watering. It is a good idea to have a department, the whole attention of which should be devoted to street cleaning. It will find plenty to do, and there is positively nothing more urgently necessary. We are not advocating more departments, which will not be under one head. What Montreal requires is one of the best city engineers that it can secure; whether the salary be \$5,000 or \$25,000 is a small matter comparatively. We want a man who will be capable of looking ahead and to whom all the works departments would be responsible. If such an official had been appointed a year ago, for instance, we have no doubt that the city would have availed itself of the opening of Sherbrooke Street from end to end, to arrange for conduits, and put some of the unsightly wires underground.

Coal and Iron. Professor Kemp, who is professor of Geology at Columbia University, does not agree with Mr. Carnegie that the world is in any immediate danger of running short of iron, and consequently of steel. He thinks there is enough in sight for the next fifteen hundred years. By that time, some chemist will probably have discovered something "just as good," and at any rate, that is one of the worries we can afford to leave to posterity. He is more afraid of the coal supply running short. This also need not worry the present generation, and probably will not worry future generations. "White coal," otherwise electricity, produced by water power, is rapidly taking the place of black coal, and there is nothing in which the human race is so prodigally extravagant, as in the waste of coal. Not ten per cent. of the thermal units in coal, are actually made available to-day for the service of man. Over ninety per cent. is lost in various forms of leakage. As coal gets scarcer and consequently dearer, greater economy will be practised, science will be stimulated to the practical utilization of a larger proportion of the coal's potentiality, and more substitutes will be discovered for the production of every form of energy, for which coal is now used.