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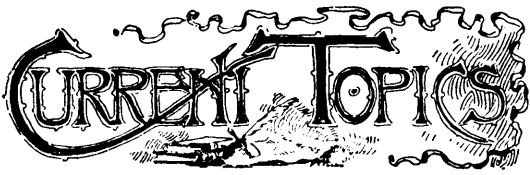
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"The English Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec," writes Mr. S. E. Dawson, in the *Week*, "ought to be very unhappy, if for no other reason, because so many estimable people in the sister provinces and in the United States seem to be distressed on their account. It is not pleasant to be the object of so much solicitude." And then, with characteristic ability and good sense, Mr. Dawson proceeds to show how unfounded this anxiety is, how inopportune is the agitation based upon it, and how illogical are some of the arguments by which it is supported. First of all he points out that, the doctrine of States' rights having come into vogue in the other provinces, it is not in accordance with their favourite theory that they should afford much help to the Protestants of Quebec, who, by their showing, are in such wretched plight. The strange thing is that the Protestants who have lived here all their lives realize none of the disadvantages which these sympathetic outsiders discern in their position. "An Englishman may dwell a life-time in peace in French Canada. Nobody will leave tracts at his door or give them to his children. He may be on excellent terms, and even exchange hospitalities, with the *Curé*, but if that reverend gentleman should feel any doubts about his host's future state, he will never be disagreeable enough to express them. In Montreal there is the most absolute freedom of discussion for Protestants." In proof of this last statement, Mr. Dawson quotes the remarks of a clergyman who took part in the Evangelical Alliance about a year ago.

There is one fact to which Mr. Dawson calls attention, the significance of which has never before, we believe, been pointed out. Writing of certain peculiar advantages enjoyed by the Roman Catholic Church in the Province of Quebec, he reminds his readers that the Church of Rome simply accepted a policy which the Protestants, by their own action, made impossible of application to themselves. "No one dreamed of disestablishment then. The intention was to establish and endow, first the Church of England, and then the Church of Scotland as Protestant churches, and, in a less degree, the Roman Church for the French population. The first part of the plan was not possible upon this continent at that period. The Protestants united to frustrate it. They broke down the establishment and destroyed the endowments intended for themselves. Whether they were right or wrong is not in dispute. The fact is that they did it, while the French stood aside, seeing that the quarrel was none of theirs. But the Roman Catholics would not break up their own

quasi establishment, and, therefore, it remains to this day." What privileges it implies in no way affect the Protestant minority, who are fully protected by Imperial statutes and Canadian law. The apprehensions, based on the writings of extremists, are without foundation. The "Source du Mal" was condemned and suppressed by the Church authorities. Nor, till overt action be taken, need even utterances *ex-cathedra* excite alarm. "The Revised Statutes of Quebec are law here. not the Syllabus of errors." In a subsequent article Mr. Dawson will elucidate the parochial system in this province.

The favourable view that Dr. Lansdell's work, "Through Siberia," gave of the Russian prison system in that "great, lone land" was shown, by Mr. Kennan's revelations, to have far too little basis in fact. The contrast between the account of the English missionary and that of the American explorer was, indeed, so marked that inquirers might naturally be puzzled which of them to credit. That Dr. Lansdell was sincere in his defence of the Russians from the charges of inhumanity, which had for generations been made by all who claimed to know anything of Siberia and its hapless convicts will readily be admitted. But it is equally certain that Mr. Kennan arrived at his conclusions reluctantly and only after the most careful and thorough investigation. Dr. Lansdell, in his later work on "Russian Central Asia," replies at length to some of the criticisms to which certain of his statements have been subjected. He denies that he had been deceived by the prison authorities. Now comes a third, who having crossed Siberia in mid-winter, had opportunities of asking various persons in the country which of the two narratives was the more correct. He was indebted to Dr. Lansdell for many kindnesses, and was, therefore, naturally disposed to sympathize with him. If regard for truth had justified his doing so, he would have confirmed what Dr. Lansdell had written. But all the information that he could collect tended the other way. He acknowledges that Dr. Lansdell had disproved some current stories of Russian treatment of political prisoners, but he is forced to admit that Dr. Lansdell's pictures of Russian prison administration are, on the whole, far too rose-coloured and attribute to the functionaries a humanity which they are far from exercising. He could not help bearing testimony to the unsparing pains that Mr. Kennan had taken to arrive at the truth, and he pronounces that gentleman's description of the sufferings of the exiles entirely trustworthy. This impartial witness is Mr. Lionel F. Gowing, whose record of his mid-winter journey across Siberia has just been published.

It was quite natural that Mr. Prior, in seconding the address in reply to the speech from the Throne, should dwell at some length on the Behring Sea seizures. It is satisfactory to know that the Government of the Dominion has taken a firm stand on this question, and it is to be hoped that before the present season begins our sealers will be freed from the perplexity and peril that have proved such a drawback in their industry for some years back. Representations have been made to the Imperial authorities on the subject, which, it is hoped, have had due weight and we have assurance that the difficulties presented by the extraordinary claims of the United States will shortly be removed. Mr. Prior was happy in citing a high American authority on international law in proof of the invalidity of his own government's pretensions.

The entrance to Behring Sea is 139 miles wide and the western limit of it is Russian territory. During the period of Russia's occupation of Alaska, the Americans had resisted the claims of the Czar, and that they should now insist on a privilege which they declined to recognize when Behring Sea was far more a *mare clausum* than it is to-day is absurdly inconsistent. The controversy can only be decided in one way, but as Mr. Prior reminded his hearers, the sealers had had their patience sorely tried, and it was fully time the question was definitely settled.

The statement made some time ago in the *Canadian Gazette* that Drs. Sheldon and Edmunds had been invited by the Government of Mexico to visit that country with a view to ascertaining its suitability for British emigrants has elicited some pertinent reflections from the *Manitoba Free Press*. Our contemporary naturally thinks that if England has a superfluous population well adapted for life in the New World, it is to Canada, not to Mexico, it should be directed. The North-West needs settlers above all things. Before the end of the century it ought to have a million or two, and such an increase is not to be looked for unless an intelligent and vigorous immigration policy is prosecuted. It certainly seems surprising that men of eminence like Drs. Sheldon and Edmunds, who know so well what advantages our North-West offers to inhabitants of the British Isles, should lend themselves to a scheme that would divert emigration from Canada and rob the Empire of citizens. The *Free Press* hardly considers it a very loyal proceeding. Assuredly it is not patriotic. Besides, it is absurd that England the mother land of so many colonies, with millions of square miles of unoccupied land awaiting cultivation, should dream of seeking a home for her sons amid an alien community. We cannot believe that such a blunder is contemplated, but whether or not, those who are interested in the filling up of the North-West should bestir themselves in urging its claims to the best class of agricultural emigrants that Great Britain has to spare.

Writing of the British Columbia flour trade, the *Winnipeg Commercial* says that, although some time ago the Victoria Board of Trade protested against a further increase of the duty, which consumers of United States flour in the province would regard as a burden, "Victoria is now moving to secure the establishing of a roller flour mill in the city, and this may lead the people of that place at least to regard with less opposition the proposals to increase the duty on flour. Vancouver, too, has recently been putting forth some effort to secure a flour mill, and a paper published at that place recently intimated that in view of such possibilities for the future, the proposed increase in the flour duties might be considered as not altogether objectionable."

The attempt to abolish the French language in the Canada of the Union *régime* gave rise to such dissatisfaction that it was found necessary, in the cause of peace and good will between the two great sections of our population to rescind the disqualifying ordinance. Since the early years of Lord Elgin's administration, there was no movement towards the unsettling of the bi-lingual arrangement until last year. The Act of 1867 renewed the arrangement for the Dominion and Quebec. French was also permitted in the North-West. Mr. McCarthy would do away with it there. His bill is arousing much controversy.