

Editorial.

The Medical Act.

Some weeks since we took an opportunity of examining into the merits and demerits of the new Medical Act, and gave our opinion upon the benefits to be derived therefrom.

Since that time the House has met, and the Bill has come up for consideration. It is introduced and defended very ably by the Hon. Provincial Secretary.

Some members of the Legislature, however, appear to be opposed to it,—but we must say that, in our opinion, if the reasons given in their speeches are the only ones, they are insufficient and not grounded upon a fair understanding of its provisions, and of what may reasonably be expected to be the effect of these provisions.

One Hon. Gentleman objected that "the Bill was not needed—was not called for by the country,—that there were sufficient restrictions now to the practising of medicine,—that there was no pressure of quackery in the Province,—that the present license system was sufficient,—that no one was compelled to employ a quack, and that the people had sense enough not to prefer ignorant and unqualified men."

On the first of these objections we take issue with him, and we do think that the expressed opinion of nine-tenths of the respectable medical men in the Province might at least have as much weight as the opinion of the Hon. Gentleman, especially when we consider that probably there is not one of these gentlemen who is not both in natural and acquired ability, the equal of the Hon. Member, and from his position also, a better judge of whether it is needed or not.

Upon the question whether there are at present sufficient restrictions on the practice of medicine we will not undertake to decide, but beg to point out to the Hon. Gentleman that the Bill in question does not impose a single additional restriction with the exception of the very simple one, that by a mere producing of his certificates before the Registrar, the physician shall in return receive such public announcement as shall throughout the Province, be considered a final settlement of his professional standing. And not only this, but it opens a door to a very respectable body of physicians, who heretofore, from the fact of having been educated in foreign colleges, have been prevented from affording their professional services to our population without first undergoing an amount of badgering in the Circumlocution office, that has hitherto hindered all but a very small portion from subjecting themselves to it.

As to the pressure of quackery in the Province we would only point the Hon. Gentleman to the thousand and one advertisements in the papers of every conceivable abomination warranted to cure every disease incident to the human race,—to the number of ignorant and unprincipled pretenders, who throng the chambers of the sick throughout the country, making disease fifty times more hideous and fatal, by their vile nostrums, than in its own naked deformity, it ever was,—and all this for the mere desire of gain. It may be, and no doubt is as the Hon. Gentleman says, that no person is compelled to employ a quack, but we would ask how, unless some provision is made, as in this Bill, to point out who are and who are not qualified physicians, are people to know whom to call upon? To say that people have sense enough not to prefer ignorant or unqualified men is only begging the question,—nor do the provisions of this Bill put any restrictions upon any person,—they do not say you must employ a registered physician; but merely point out the fact that this man has proved himself before men skilled in the knowledge of medical science, to possess a fair share of such knowledge; and that another one has not—leaving it to that "sense" which the Hon. Gentleman speaks of, to decide which to employ.

Another Hon. Gentleman objects that even the oldest medical practitioner must be registered, or lose his rights and privileges,—this is an objection which, we will warrant, scarcely one single practitioner in the Province will care one farthing about,—in fact, a large majority have stated their signatures in a Petition to the Legislature that they are willing to incur any necessary trouble and expense, in return for a recognition of their professional status.

The objection with regard to employment by Government of non-registered physicians, is one we should not have expected to have heard from the mouth of the Hon. Gentleman who delivered it. The fair conclusion from the provisions of the Bill is that all respectably educated physicians will be registered,—and yet the Hon. Member would prefer that Government should have liberty to employ in such cases, as required knowledge on medical subjects,—men utterly ignorant of that knowledge. As well might the Hon. Gentleman wish to see the office of Atty. General or Queen's Counsel open to any person, be he lawyer or not, who might choose to think himself able to attend to its duties.

Another objection is to the Board of Physicians being the body who shall have the power of determining who are hereafter to be registered and who are not,—thus opening a door for injustice in occasions of excitement. Now we cannot see that a council elected every two or five years from the general body of medical men throughout the Province is more likely to act unjustly or admit improper persons than would be even his Excellency and Council; and we can see that from the fact of their being highly intelligent men, and having their minds constantly exercised on the subject, they are more likely to be conservators of the public good in this matter than would be a body like the Executive Council, the minds of whose members are constantly taken up with other things; and moreover are not sufficiently disciplined on such subjects to be the best judges of what is right and what is wrong. The Hon. Gentleman also stated that the Board have the power, with our assent, to decide which colleges should by their diploma entitle any one of their alumni to registration. Now Section 14 says that "The decision of the Medical Council on this question shall be subject to the approval of the Governor in Council,"—and this will be a sufficient surety against abuse,—even if a Medical Council, composed of some of the first men in the country in point of knowledge and character, could be guilty of such an outrage as the exclusion of any respectable chartered and well-ordered college from the benefits of this Act.

The Hon. Gentleman wound up by saying that the effect of the Bill was to centralize a Medical Council in St. John, and to subsidize every other medical man throughout the Province. This we do not exactly understand, but if he means that from the fact of a larger number of medical men being gathered together in St. John than in any other portion of the Province, they will exercise a greater influence than any others of the same class, we can only see in it an exemplification of the fact which we see every where else, that "majority rules the day,"—nor can we see how it can possibly be productive of any injurious effect. And as to the subsidizing every other medical man in the Province,—if this means that medical men will have a monopoly of those few offices which require medical knowledge, we must say that we think it would only be a compliance with the oft-quoted maxim of the Hon. Gentleman's party,—"The right men in the right place."

A Glance at the House from the Reporter's Gallery.

The first thing which would strike a stranger looking down at the House from the Gallery is its disorderly character.—Not that the members are engaged in any breach of the rules of order that could be noticed and checked by the Speaker, nor that they were very noisy. But generally when the House is discussing an interesting question as well as when mere Executive business is in hand, unless the subject is a very engaging one, and few members attend to what he says. Even good speakers,—of which the number is very limited,—frequently fail to secure a very attentive hearing. Members seem to make a rule of doing a great deal of talking and very little listening. Whilst a debate is going on some are writing newspapers, some in writing letters, some in a whispered conversation with their neighbors, others in their own reflections. We have often, while some member was holding forth evidently much to his own satisfaction, looked round the House to see how many were attending to him; and have found perhaps five or six doing so out of twenty or thirty. Such inattention must be rather annoying to sensitive debaters; and occasionally a gentleman will stop in his address and look round, half despairing, and wholly true. The Speaker or Chairman, interpreting the look, will call out "Order! Order!" lustily, and for a few moments, and for a few moments only, there will be a slight lull in the murmur of conversation. But most speakers pay as little attention to his fellow-members as they do to him, and keeps on the even tenor of his way to the end.

The most indefatigable talker in the House is Mr. Mitchell. He speaks on almost every question, he frequently speaks several times upon it, and he speaks lengthily. Scarcely a member in the House does more work on the floor than he. He is very persevering, but his perseverance often runs into unreasonable tenaciousness. And he shows too much temper. In committee of the whole House the Speaker leaves the chair and takes his seat as a member. In committee of the whole Mr. Speaker Johnson is one of the most useful members on the floor. He is exceedingly quick and acute. His mind is logical; and he generally hits upon the real point at issue, and the true principle involved in the pending question. He is argumentative, rather than dogmatical or declamatory. He states his argument clearly and explicitly, and applies with force and precision. From the character of his mind he is apt occasionally to fall into the argufying and hairsplitting view. Still in discussion of a question with which party feelings do not enter these peculiarities are not very observable. Among the other members who do the work in discussions are Messrs. End, Gilmore, Wilmot, Gray, Smith, Botsford, Haunington, Steadman, Kerr, Lewis, and Brown. Mr. End talks a great deal, and exhibits no little wit and humor. His influence is said to be small. Mr. Wilmot talks frequently, but briefly. He enunciates opinions rather than argues. His political feelings seem to be strong; and he not infrequently fires a shot at the Government, with a good aim. Mr. Haunington is a large, stout, burly man; full of life and energy. He speaks in a loud tone, and with much earnestness and force, but with little elegance. His long experience as a member, added to his additional experience as speaker, has given him a knowledge of the rules and customs of the House which make him an authority in those matters. He is never backward in expressing his opinion on disputed points of order, and often sets the House right, and relieves it from doubt and difficulty. Mr. Lewis, though a frequent speaker, can scarcely be called a debater. He seldom makes an attempt at an argument, but contents himself with expressing in a few words his opinions, which he does freely and frankly. But enough of the debaters for the present.

Parties and party feeling seem scarcely to exist. Scarcely a word is spoken about Government or opposition, except in jest. A great deal of good feeling is exhibited. This calm is no doubt partially due to the fact that the House is now in session, and the members are not yet so tired as they were last session. They are no longer a mere machine, moving as the wires are pulled. Great changes of feeling and opinion have come over many of them; and it is perhaps doubtful whether even in a case of emergency the Government could rally them all to the rescue. There appears to be very much less discussing; and very much more independence of thought and action. What the result of a vote on a test question would be time alone can tell.

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Post Office Regulations.

We are under obligations to the Hon. J. M. Johnson for a volume of thirty-five pages containing the "Regulations and Instructions of the Post Office." These Regulations were compiled and codified by Mr. Johnson when Postmaster General, and issued in October 1853. They comprise rules and instructions for the guidance of officers in every branch of the service. By a judicious codification and arrangement the regulations upon any particular subject can be found with the greatest ease. The Regulations are divided into twenty-four parts, under the respective titles, and treating of the respective subjects of—General Regulations; Dispatches and Receipts of Mails; Provincial Rates of Postage; Packet Letters; Soldiers' and Seamen's letters; Ship letters; Registrations; Forward Offices; Postage rates on Books, Periodicals, and Pamphlets; Book Postage to British Colonies, passing thro' Great Britain; newspapers postage stamps; Misset and Redirected Letters; Papers, &c.; Dead Letters; Overcharges and Allowances; Way Letters and Newspapers; Conveyance of Mails; Monthly Returns, &c.; Quarterly Returns; Special Directions and Instructions concerning the general duties of Post Office. Each part is divided into numbered sections, and a list of contents is prefixed to each part, with the subject of each section opposite to its number, aids in finding the rule of the office upon any certain subject. The code must be very useful to the officers of the Postal service; and it is highly creditable to Mr. Johnson.

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ARRIVAL OF THE PRINCE ALBERT.

The Prince Albert at St. John's, N.S., on the 17th, with Liverpool dates to the 4th, on London (by telegraph) to the 6th. Queen Victoria opened Parliament in person on the 3rd. The speech commences with congratulations on the state of the country and the progress making in India. On foreign affairs it says: "I receive from all foreign powers assurances of friendly feeling. To cultivate these feelings, to maintain inviolate the faith of public treaties, to contribute as far as my influence can extend to the preservation of the general peace, are objects of my unceasing solicitude. The conclusion of the treaty with regard to the Principalities, and one of commerce with Russia, are noticed, and the latter is referred to as an indication of the complete establishment of friendly relations between the two countries. The treaties with China and Japan are mentioned as promising great commercial advantages. Satisfaction is expressed at the abolition by France of Negro Immigration on the east coast of Africa, and pending negotiations give promise of the total abandonment of the system. In respect to Mexico the speech says: "The state of the Republic of Mexico, distracted by civil wars, has induced me to carry forbearance to the utmost limit in regard to the wrongs and indignities to which British residents have been subjected at the hands of the two contending parties. They have at length been carried to such an extent that I have been compelled to give instructions to the commander of my naval forces in those seas to demand, and, if necessary, enforce reparation." Increased expenditure on the navy is asked on account of the universal introduction of steam power into naval warfare. The rest of the speech is devoted to local matters, and amongst the measures promised the Parliamentary Reform and a new Bankruptcy Law.

Addresses in reply to the Speech were passed in both Houses. Lord Melbourne in the Lords and Palmerston in the Commons, complained of the silence in regard to the threatening state of the Italian question and other matters of interest.

Lord Derby and Mr. Russell, expressed confidence that peace would be maintained. Warlike rumours are still in circulation, but there is nothing decisive. France continues her preparations. It is rumoured that the Duke de Malakoff will soon return and be succeeded at London by the Duke de Montebello.

Prince Napoleon and bride had arrived at Paris. The Sardinian Government have decided upon the loan. It is reported that the King of Sardinia is about to marry the sister of the Emperor of Russia, the widow of the Duke of Leuchtenberg.

Warlike preparations were going forward actively, but the Ministerial journals are recommended to keep silent on the subject. Latest letters speak of war symptoms being decidedly on the increase. There is great anxiety for the Emperor's Speech on the opening of the Legislature on the 7th. It is rumoured that he is preparing a surprise for the world and that war is certain.

The minister of War has decided that the emigration of Africans shall be superseded by that of Chinese. There are rumours in England of extensive warlike preparations, including an increase of 3000 men for the Navy. Turin letters say matters look slightly more pacific there.

The Austria six millions loan was introduced in London at 80. It bears 6 per cent. interest, and was quoted at discount for some time, but suddenly improved and closed at a small premium. The Queen's Speech is considered very noncommittal, and is silent on the war question. It caused a decline of funds both in London and Paris.

MARKETS.

Consols 95 1/8 for account, 95 3/8 for money (so in the despatch.) Flour dull, but firm for choice. All quotations are per hundred pounds. Flour general, 10s to 12s. Wheat firm and quiet. Red Western 6s 10d. White 8s 1d.

lower Courts, and have two sittings in each County if necessary. This revision would affect a very considerable saving in the expense of the Courts, which is an absolutely necessary consideration in the present financial condition of the Country.

Mr. Kerr thought that the Courts of Common Pleas should be abolished; but that change would involve the appointment of another Judge. Almost the whole time of one Judge was required in St. John. He would not extend the jurisdiction of magistrates, but would have all law-suits tried in the Supreme Court.

Progress was reported upon this Bill. A similar Bill for the County of Kent was committed, upon which progress was also reported.

Mr. Smith moved the appointment of a special committee to take into consideration and report upon all these Bills which was carried.

The Speaker named Messrs. Smith, Kerr, and Chandler the committee.—Mr. Desbrisay thought that the sitting of the Courts had been hitherto fixed for the convenience of the lawyers and not the public. The lawyers in this seemed to think that no one but themselves had a right to open their mouths in this House. This little attack made quite a ferment amongst the lawyers.

Hon. Mr. Smith replied warmly to Mr. Desbrisay. The Speaker struck off the committee which he had named, and said that being a lawyer himself he should leave the appointment to the House. After this little quarrel had fermented awhile, several members, one after another, rose to say that they entirely approved of the committee named by the Speaker. But the three legal gentlemen put themselves on their dignity, and declined to serve. Messrs. Desbrisay, Callip and End were named the Committee.

A STRANGE DISEASE. A singular and malignant disease has appeared in Providence, and some cases have proved fatal. The Providence Post says of it:—"It commences as a little dark red spot, on the face or hands, with, perhaps, a stinging or pricking pain, on which spot there soon appears a pustule or vesicle seated on a hard inflamed base, in which is formed a slough of charcoal blackness, where mortification commences. The effect is attracting the earnest attention of the physicians. The only effectual mode of treatment is said to be, to burn the pimple out in its early stages, with a hot iron or with caustic. In view of the rather undefined nature of this disease, we would suggest that it is eminently desirable, if any one is troubled with a pimple swelling of an unusual character, that a physician should be at once consulted before it is tampered with. Although there is no cause for general alarm, a disease of this malignant type cannot be checked too early."

HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT AND PILLS.—Cough, sore throat, bronchitis, asthma, tightness of the chest and pain in the left side, the precursors and accompaniments of Consumption, are rapidly subdued by the regular application of the Ointment after warm fomentation of the throat, chest and side. There is no preparation in existence which passes so quickly from the surface to the diseased and irritated membrane employed in the office of respiration. One or two applications will sometimes restore the voice which has been reduced to a husky whisper by cold, and enable the gasping victim of asthma to breathe freely, regularly, and without pain. A few doses of the Pills, by promoting the general health of the system, minister to the perfection and permanency of the cure. Beware of counterfeits: see Caution at foot of Holloway's advertisements.

A BRITISH REGIMENT IN NEW YORK.—The Gothamite military are on the qui vive in regard to the expected arrival in that city at an early day of the 42nd Highlanders, of the British army, on route for France, by way of the isthmus. With the exception of the Montreal company, present at the Cable celebration last fall, this will be the first appearance of British troops in New York, since the evacuation in 1783. The 42nd Highlanders is a crack regiment in the British army, and has borne the British flag in battle and victory in all parts of the world, where the hardest fighting has been done—under Marlborough, at Waterloo, in Spain, in India, and the Crimea. The officers of the Seventh Regiment have already taken the initial steps to give the famous visitors a suitable reception, which it is hoped they will not decline. (Boston Journal.)

UPON THE COMMITMENT OF A BILL TO ALTER THE TIME OF HOLDING THE CIRCUIT COURT IN THE COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE some observations are made of General interest.

Hon. Mr. Watters thought that we had too many courts, and an entire revision of them was needed. It would be better to abolish the Courts of Common Pleas, and establish two sittings of the Supreme Court in each County. Suitors were declined to bring their suits in the Common Pleas Courts. Let this Court be abolished, and replaced by the Supreme Court, which ability and legal knowledge could had.

Mr. Williston entirely agreed with the Speaker. Suitors are not willing to bring their suits in the Common Pleas, and would increase the jurisdiction of the

lower Courts, and have two sittings in each County if necessary. This revision would affect a very considerable saving in the expense of the Courts, which is an absolutely necessary consideration in the present financial condition of the Country.

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