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Manager and Editor

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 27, 1900.

The nuisance of automobiles on the public roads in Great Britain may possibly be overcome by the building of roads exclusively for their use. A tax on gasoline is expected to provide the necessary money. This is a serious attempt to overcome a difficult problem.

A few days ago it was Lord Grey, now it is Lt.-Governor J. M. Gibson, of Ontario, who has broken over the bounds that doth hedge in governors, and he must also be pronounced guilty of militarism. In an address to the boys of St. Andrew's College, Toronto, the other day he strongly advocated training in the use of the rifle, comparing it with golf playing to the serious discomfiture of the latter. But His Honor is an old rifle shot and evidently does not play golf.

The Dominion Presbyterian in past months has afforded full scope for the discussion of the Union question in its various aspects. It is well that our people should have before them the opinions of ministers and others for and against Union, so we make no apology for the space given Rev. R. G. MacBeth's calm and well considered plea for Federation rather than Organic Union. Rev. Alex. Henderson's criticism, also published in this issue, will be read with interest.

Rev. Mr. Allen's comments on the crowded condition in which many foreigners live in Winnipeg, to which he referred last week, seem to have been justified. One person has been fined for crowding twenty-five persons into three rooms, and another for crowding thirty-two persons into four rooms. Fancy 57 persons living in 7 rooms, in a country where there is so much room. There cannot be either proper sanitary conditions or decency where people live huddled together in such a manner.

THE NORTH POLE AND ITS VISITORS.

Our own Canadian, Capt. Bernier, has returned from the Arctic regions after an absence of fifteen months, and has an interesting story to tell of his experiences. Unlike Peary and Cook he does not claim to have reached the North Pole, though he had theories which seemed reasonable as to the best way by which that might be accomplished. His highest latitude was 84.0, and he has taken possession of territory hitherto unannexed in the name of Canada, though what use it will be it is difficult to conjecture, except as a possible hunting ground for those whose enthusiasm for sport may lead them to go so far afield in search of game.

Meantime the controversy between Peary and Cook goes on. Why should they not both have reached the pole? It is true that it would be rather remarkable if, after all these years of effort, two explorers should have reached the goal independently, within a few months of each other, but there is nothing impossible about it. The glory consists in having been the first, and if Cook got there, as he alleges, and as Queen Alexandra, Greely the Arctic explorer, Knud Rasmussen, the celebrated Danish explorer and many other scientists think, Peary who has made a number of attempts, is deprived of that glory. The only reasonable ground one can see for doubting whether Cook got there, is the fact, if fact it is, that he said he reached the top of Mount McKinley when he really did not. He now announces that he is organizing a party to go there and procure the records he says he left. If he can prove his veracity as to Mount McKinley there will be the more reason to believe that he reached the North Pole. The two Eskimo who were with him have been interviewed by friends of both Cook and Peary and have told each the story which they wished to hear (doubtless an Eskimo characteristic) so their evidence appears to have become valueless, and proofs must be sought elsewhere. Peary has not conducted himself in an agreeable manner. It was a spiteful proceeding on his part to refuse to allow Harry Whitney to bring Cook's records and instruments on board the Roosevelt; so they had to be left in Greenland and will not be available till next year. His treatment of Capt. Bartlett too, is inexcusable. He allowed him to accompany him as far as latitude 88 degree, and when within measurable distance of their goal, sent him back to the ship, in order that he might have the glory of reaching the pole all to himself. It is also stated that he helped himself to some of Cook's provisions at Etah. Nor is his treatment of Iverdrup ten years ago forgotten.

The whole matter resolves itself into a question of personal veracity. It is unfortunate that scientists should so far forget themselves as to enter into a controversy that would be discreditable to the factions in opposing athletic teams.

After all, it may be asked, cui bono—what good will the discovery of the pole do? At one time it was thought

that something of scientific or physical interest would be found. Neither Cook nor Peary tell us of any important discovery. The revolution of the earth on its axis was no more evident to the senses there than elsewhere. It may have been a novel sensation to see the polar star directly overhead, to know that all points of the compass had disappeared except south, and to be in a spot where there was only one day, and one night, of equal length, in a year. But these things were known before. No land was found, and if there was it would not be fit for colonization purposes. The pole is not likely to become a summer resort, or a destination for excursions, even when flying machines have reached greater perfection. If Scott, who now feels encouraged to press on, should reach the South Pole, where there is supposed to be land, we will give him the glory, but after that the money, and the time, and the effort expended in these attempts to reach the ends of the earth may well be diverted in other directions which will be of greater service to humanity.

UNREST IN SPAIN.

King Alfonso of Spain is learning by sad experience the truth of the saying, "Uneasy is the head that wears a crown." He is virtually a prisoner in his palace, for some of his subjects have vowed vengeance against him for having permitted Prof. Ferrer, a revolutionary leader, to be executed; and in other countries indignation meetings are being held and strong resolutions passed condemning the shooting of Ferrer.

With the merits of the Ferrer case we are not familiar, but we assume that he had a fair trial and his fate was the result of due process of law. The King might of course have intervened to save his life, for executive clemency can be and often is exercised, but Alfonso does not seem to have considered that this was a case which called for clemency. And so because the law was allowed to take its course the King's life is in peril. He had a narrow escape on his wedding day. Perhaps he will not escape so well at the next attempt.

As a further result of the condition of affairs a crisis has occurred at the Spanish capital. The government has been upset and a new premier and a new set of advisers assume control. Whether these changes will amount to a revolution or not remains to be seen, but the King and his queen, who is a niece of King Edward of Great Britain, must be having a very uncomfortable time.

Mr. James H. Ashdown, a merchant of Winnipeg, has given the munificent sum of \$100,000 to Wesley College, in that city. The writer remembers when Mr. Ashdown commenced business as a working tinsmith in a little log shop on a side street in the Manitoba capital. He afterwards branched out into the hardware trade, and by industry and integrity has built up a large and prosperous business. It is satisfactory to see him devoting a portion of his wealth to the cause of education. Others might well follow his example.

Friends are reminded of the Queen's University Alumni Conference, commencing Monday, 1st November. A good programme has been arranged, and a large attendance is expected.