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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Sept. 18th, 1875.

THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM.

In the great State elections which are at present going on, or being prepared, in the United States, it was to have been expected that the financial question would have served as a pivot whereon the issues of success would turn. But both parties are divided on this subject, and the Democrats of the West are opposed to their colleagues of the East as to the advisability of returning to specie payments. The West is generally disposed towards inflation, while the East favors contraction. In order, however, to prevent a split in the ranks, and to unite upon some temporary scheme of harmonious compromise, the Democrats of Pennsylvania, imitating their friends in Ohio, have decided upon the following resolutions. They hold that the contraction of the money currency and circulating medium heretofore made by the Republican party, and the further contraction proposed by it, with a view to forced resumption of specie payments, has already brought disaster to the business of the country, and threatens general bankruptcy. In consequence, they demand that this policy be abandoned, and that the volume of money be made and kept equal to the wants of trade, leaving the restoration of legal tenders to par in gold to be brought about by promoting the industries of the people, and not by destroying them.

They add that the policy already initiated by the Republican party of abolishing legal tenders, and giving the national banks the power to furnish all the currency, will increase the power of an already dangerous monopoly, and the enormous burdens now oppressing the people, without compensating advantages; and they ask that all the national bank circulation be promptly and permanently retired, and full legal tenders issued in their place.

Furthermore, they maintain that the public interest demands that the Government should cease to discredit its own money, and should make its legal tenders receivable for all public dues, except where respect for the obligation of contracts requires payment in coin.

Finally they propose the extinction of the present national banks and the establishment in their stead of a system of free banks of discount and deposit, under such regulations as the States respectively may prescribe, and no paper money, except such as may be issued directly and upon the faith of the Federal Government, affording practically a currency based on the gold and silver and other property of the whole people of the country.

It will thus be seen that the Pennsylvania Democratic Convention demands first, that the contraction of the currency which Secretary BRISTOW has commenced under the law, with a view to the resumption of specie payments at a fixed time, shall be stopped, and secondly, that there shall be no national banks; that the notes of the Federal Government shall be alone tolerated as paper money; and that banks, which shall be institutions of discount

and deposit only, shall be established by the different States.

This is strong language, but it cannot possibly meet the views of the minority. The further question then arises—how is the minority to act? Separating from the party would only insure its defeat and lead to no practical result. Senator THURMAN, of Ohio, has proposed a clever means of escape, which is simply to relegate the financial question to the second plane, for the present, and make the attack and rout of official corruption, the main work of the electoral campaign. On this ground all the members of the Democratic party can heartily unite, and uniting, will be sure to triumph, both in the preliminary State elections, and in the Presidential canvass of next year.

This idea has been eagerly caught up in Pennsylvania and is thus put forward by a party organ:—

The currency question to-day in Pennsylvania is an abstraction, but the existence of a Treasury Ring is a pernicious, far-reaching reality. Another reality, worse and more pernicious, is Grantism in the national administration, and this the Treasury Ring is identified with and represents. The first duty is to expel and reform these great and actual evils. No believer in hard money, and no friend of honest government, should fail to support the Erie Ticket because of anything objectionable respecting this abstraction that is contained in the platform.

SIR ALEXANDER GALT ON THE SITUATION.

As a chronicler of public opinion, and reserving our right of future comment, we think it well to set before our readers an analysis of a public letter which Sir ALEXANDER GALT has just put forth. It was written in reply to a question of Hon. JAMES FERRIER on the rumor that Sir ALEXANDER was about to reenter Parliament as member for Montreal West, in the Liberal interest.

The former member for Sherbrooke begins by stating that he continues to belong, with very many others, to that section of the so-called Conservative Party, which regretfully acquiesced in the condemnation passed by the country upon the late Administration. He cannot blame those members of his party, who found it their duty to sustain Mr. MACKENZIE's efforts to carry on the Government, which he would have been utterly unable to do if dependent only on the support of his immediate political friends. The exigency of the hour necessitated a breach in the former party, and had he then been in Parliament, Mr. MACKENZIE would have received from him all needful support. This necessity has now passed away, and the Administration must henceforth be judged on its own merits, and not supported from any alleged fear that their resignation would absolutely restore Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD to power.

He regards the election of the latter distinguished gentleman to the leadership of the regular Opposition in Parliament as a grave mistake, which tends to perpetuate the breach in the party, and must ultimately lead either to the formation of new party lines, or to the final adherence of many of his friends to the so-called Liberal ranks.

Respecting the liabilities of the country, Sir ALEXANDER GALT looks with the greatest alarm at their rapid and enormous increase. Commenced by Sir JOHN, and continued and endorsed by Mr. MACKENZIE, they are augmenting in a ratio far exceeding any possible growth of our population or resources, and must inevitably soon reach such a point as will grievously press upon our industry. Though expenditure may for the moment add to the business activity of the country, and be useful at a period of serious commercial depression, yet if such outlay be not productive at a very early day, it is evident that the taxation incident to it will prove an intolerable burden.

His views with regard to the Pacific Railway are bold, uncompromising and

extreme. He believes nine-tenths of the people of Canada are convinced that the construction of the Pacific Railway is at this time, and will be for many long years, wholly unnecessary; they know the cost will be prodigious, and no one fit to govern the country can be ignorant of the fatal consequences of undertaking such an outlay. According to him the frank and honest course is to tell British Columbia that the engagement was improvident, and its fulfilment impossible; to offer reasonable equivalents for its abandonment, and failing agreement, to intimate our acquiescence in her retirement from the Confederation. She cannot complain that the connection has thus far been injurious to her; she would still remain in the Empire, and subject to the Queen.

Entering more minutely upon financial questions, Sir ALEXANDER GALT holds that Free Trade and Protection, as abstract principles, are both alike inapplicable to Canada, from its situation and circumstances. Without entering upon any argument on their merits, he points out that thorough Protection would certainly sever the connection with Great Britain, destroy our principal source of revenue, and thus induce direct taxation, while perfect Free Trade would annihilate many valuable branches of industry, and necessarily cause the immediate substitution of direct taxes in lieu of customs duties to an extent that, in his opinion, would be unbearable. Though a Free Trader theoretically himself, he has always recognized the necessity and advantage of adapting the application of principles, in themselves sound, to the circumstances of our country, the habits of our people, the conditions of our climate, and our political relations to Great Britain and other countries.

After advocating the readjustment of the tariff, he goes so far as to say that he is heartily tired of our efforts at conciliating the United States commercially. These meet with no response, and even existing treaties and laws are administered by them in a spirit of petty but vexatious exaction. He trusts that henceforward the sole consideration will be how our trade legislation is to affect ourselves. Possibly this course may produce a wiser policy on their part, more worthy of a great commercial nation. He does not attribute the present industrial depression to any special cause within the power of our Legislature to remove; it is doubtless the result in great measure of over-production elsewhere and among ourselves. But it is certainly the duty of the Government to examine the allegations of the sufferers most carefully with a view to their relief if practicable. And should such relief take the form of differential duties against the United States, he unhesitatingly adopts the position that we have a distinct and inalienable right to impose such duties if we choose.

The letter concludes with these words:—I have only to add that the strength of my convictions on these subjects is such that I could not lightly consent to endorse the views either of the present Government, or of the Opposition, so far as either are yet known.

ATLANTIC ICEBERGS AND IRON SHIPS.

The accident to the Allan steamer *Moravian* from collision with a floating iceberg on her last voyage to Quebec, serves at least as a most impressive practical commentary upon the expositions of theory and practice in regard to Atlantic ships which have already appeared in the ILLUSTRATED NEWS. The discussions have so far mainly had reference to dangers from the field and berg ice so frequently met with on the Atlantic voyage; but the intelligent reader will easily perceive that whatever protects the hull of a ship from collisions of one kind will serve with greater or less effectiveness to preserve it from destruction under collisions of every kind, and these will include ice, rocks and other ships. In the instance before us, as we had lives jeopardised which may be looked upon as, in a measure, embodiments of the intellect of the country, it would be

hardly too much for reasonable people not to expect an outspoken opinion, here and there, upon this vital, and as it will yet prove, recognizable issue. The instinct of self-preservation is not yet extinguished in the nature of man, and people will still look for defenders and exponents of the means of safety. The simplest persons know that it is necessary to give some thought to such things, and not to pass them over, always, in an interested or cowardly silence. The Hon. GEORGE BROWN, Hon. M. SPRAGUE, Chief Justices HAGARTY and ARMSTRONG, Captain WILLIAM, and Mr WILKIE, though the modern habit of reticence may possibly be upon them, can have entered into no express understanding to keep silence. We all need the information that these gentlemen can contribute. Our safety and its cause will be enhanced by such explanations, and we await them with a proper anxiety. A tacit understanding to keep silence about accidents may have existed in our Canadian social life. But it is broken through. It was nothing less than ruinous and mischievous to our nearest interests. If our ocean steamers are all that they ought to be, the sooner the fact is definitively stated the better, because if dangers of this class are inherent in ocean travel, we can inculcate the recognition of the fact upon all with whom we have influence—who will then be more likely to go into these dangers with their eyes open, and not in the bandaged condition in which so many now undertake the ocean voyage. Having arrived at this point of hopefulness and reliance that the dumb spirit in many will yet be exercised, we can freely say that we believe there is no better managed line between Europe and America than the Allan one. This may not be so great an admission as it looks. It affords us a certain confidence as to navigation of the ships; but what does it say upon the general question of construction as now under discussion in the columns of the press? Nothing. We need to know, with authority, whether the compartments on board the *Moravian* could have been trusted to have preserved that ship, had the leak been a large, in place of a rather moderate one, as things go. If those compartments in the *Moravian* really stood the shock of the collision, there will be some comfort to be derived from the knowledge of that fact. But then it will by no means follow that if the force of the collision had not been diminished by the striking of the bowsprit in the first instance, the piercing by it of the body of the ice, and the final shattering of that spar, that the ship striking upon her bow or quarter with all her way upon her, would not have got such a shock as would have started every bulkhead from stem to stern. As it was, we are told in the columns of the *Quebec Chronicle*, there was just cause for alarm, not merely among the inexperienced passengers, but even with Captain WYLIE and the experienced officers of the vessel. A controversy has been raised by Mr. RAE as to whether the iron plates were much or little bent, and an exact survey of the state of the ship before repairs commenced would have been very valuable; but whatever the degree of deflection, the resulting leak was sufficient to cause the first compartment to take water to the height of 3 feet 10 inches. This inflow the pumps were happily able to overcome and the leak was stopped. Both crew and passengers seem to have behaved admirably. The really valuable knowledge is as we see in cloudland. But one piece of important information had already been made out clearly enough, having been confirmed by multiplied instances in point, and that is, that in the vast majority of cases the compartments which should be to the vessel "as the swimming-bladder of the fish, keeping her afloat though wounded like a salmon with a fish-spear"—these compartments, we say, are usually found utterly unable from general slightness of the frame or otherwise to sustain the most ordinary shock from impact of hard bodies, or are leaky from neglect and the absence of tests in the intervals of voyages, or have the