

# NOTES FROM QUEBEC.

PUBLIC attention in "the ancient capital," and indeed all over the Province of Quebec, is concentrated just now on the formation of what French-Canadian politicians are pleased to call a "National Party." Of course it is not a "National Party" in the sense of being a party having the best interests of the Dominion at heart, and seeking by legitimate political methods to promote them; on the contrary, it will be distinctly and professedly an *imperium in imperio*, having as its chief axiomatic principle that a part is very much greater than the whole. The new party, if it should ever attain any degree of vitality, must, from the very nature of things, place itself in antagonism to all the progressive and liberal instincts of the Dominion, and it requires but little political sagacity to gauge the measure of success that is likely to follow the promulgation of this new French gospel of retrogression. For many years past the English-speaking minority have had nothing so persistently dinned into their ears as "our laws, our religion, and our language," and feeling that peace was best for all men, and that the continent was quite large enough for both nationalities, English-speaking people, under the gentle pressure of "our laws, our religion, and our language," have been steadily seeking other regions where they would not be handicapped either by French-Canadian apathy or prejudice. It is safe to say that not one English-speaking person in ten looks upon the Province of Quebec as the future home of his family, and the young men are steadily leaving us. If you ask why is this the answer is simple. Every opening in this Province, good, bad, or indifferent, is filled by a French-Canadian, so that if our young men were ever so anxious to remain there is nothing for them to do. Now, what is sought to be attained by a "National Party" is first of all to hold the Province of Quebec exclusively for the French-Canadians, and secondly, to use their political influence to dominate the other Provinces, and to fill all Government offices with men of like aims.

If a national propagandism of this character is sustained by strong religious prejudices, it practically amounts to a conspiracy which would have to be treated like any other conspiracy against the Commonwealth,—that is, of course, on the assumption that a Commonwealth exists; but manifestly a successful French-Canadian National Party would prove the death of the Commonwealth; and therefore the success of the "National Party" would free the English-speaking elements of Confederation from an ill-assorted alliance which ought never to have been entered into, and which is less needed to-day by the English than it ever was. There are educated and thoughtful French-Canadians, not numerous we admit, who see "the end from the beginning," and who are zealously labouring to stem the torrent of folly that is sweeping their compatriots along to swift disaster. The most prominent figure in this devoted band is Mr. I. Israel Tarte, a journalist of eminence, and a writer of conspicuous ability; he represents the best side of a bad case, but he does it in language of studied moderation, and presses his constitutional rights so firmly from behind the British flag that you feel half disposed to forgive the folly against which he, in company with Mr. Joly, protests, and wholly inclined to wish that his fellow-countrymen were endowed with a measure of his thoughtfulness. Mr. Tarte is too keen an observer of current events, and too much of a student, to believe that the *parti nationale* could accomplish any good for his fellow-countrymen, and he therefore addresses himself to the task of showing that the French-Canadians of this Province have treated the English minority with great consideration and unexampled liberality. With this object in view he wrote a letter to the *Mail*, and that I may put him fairly on record I shall be obliged to give a somewhat lengthy extract, my apology being that the matter is one of considerable interest at the present. Generally, I would say that Mr. Tarte's statements will not bear investigation—certainly they will not bear investigation in detail, as I shall presently show. Mr. Tarte says:—

"We see here what cannot be seen in any of the other Provinces: counties exclusively French and Catholic returning members of Parliament who are English Protestants. Our English fellow-citizens form about a fifth of the population of the Province; yet of the six Ministers which constitute the Provincial Cabinet, two, Messrs. Lynch and Robertson, are representatives of the English Protestant element. The Irish have one representative in the person of Mr. Flynn, and the French-Canadians have but three representatives. That is to say, that the English speaking population, which is composed of about 250,000 souls, has as many representatives in the Cabinet as have the French-Canadians who number 1,250,000.

"Does this look like exclusion? If we were disposed to establish what you are pleased to call the supremacy of our race, would we act in such a liberal manner?"

"The same proportion exists in the distribution of public offices. I take the liberty of laying before you, in your own language, these lines which I wrote some time ago:

"In the following fifteen departments of the Civil Service:

- "The Legislative Council;
- "The Legislative Assembly;
- "The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery;
- "The Law Clerk;
- "The Lieutenant-Governor;
- "The Provincial Secretary;
- "The Registrar;
- "The Attorney-General;
- "The Treasurer;
- "The Accountant;
- "Crown Lands Department;
- "Department of Agriculture;
- "Department of Public Instruction;
- "Railways;
- "Inspection of Public Offices;—

"In those fifteen branches of the Civil Service the salaries of the French-Canadian employes amount to \$110,450, while the salaries of the employes of English origin amount to \$42,750; that is to say, that our fellow citizens of British origin draw very near the half of the sum paid to the officers of French-Canadian extraction."

"Are those facts and figures of a kind to convince you that, in protest against the action of the Government, we had in view the maintenance of that supposed system of domination over the English, and the desire of establishing what the *Mail* calls the *tyranny of the minority*?"

Mr. Tarte draws a marked distinction when he says that "counties exclusively French and Catholic return members of Parliament who are English Protestants." I may therefore accept "English Protestants" as "the minority"; but I shall make three columns, and, without giving undue prominence to gentlemen who might not care to have their names discussed in this controversy, I shall merely note them by the salaries paid, so that at a glance your readers may see that the liberality spoken of by Mr. Tarte has but slight foundation in fact, and hardly any when it is remembered that most of the "minority" appointments were made long before the present "exclusive movement" had originated among the French-Canadians of this Province. I have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible in the accompanying lists, but it is not always easy to collect definite information scattered through many books; however, so far as I am able to judge, the results are perfectly reliable. In the meantime I will select the four following important departments from Mr. Tarte's list, and ask him to show that there is a Protestant in any one of them, viz.:—Attorney-General's Office; Public Works; Provincial Secretary's Office; Railways.

	FRENCH.	PROTESTANT.	IRISH AND ENGLISH R.C.
House of Assembly .....	\$19,850 00	\$1,250 00*	\$3,900 00
Attorney General's Office .....	4,900 00		
Treasury Department .....	8 0 00	7,850 00	2,600 00
Audit Department .....	6,150 00		3,650 00
Agriculture and Public Works .....	16,300 00		1,600 00
Legislative Council .....	8,250 00	800 00	1,200 00
Clerk of the Crown in Chancery .....	800 00		
Law Clerk .....	2,500 00	600 00	
Lieutenant-Governor's Office .....	175 00	1,000 00	1,250 00
Executive Council .....	2,800 00		
Provincial Secretary .....	7,700 00		1,200 00
Provincial Registrar .....	2,800 00		
Crown Lands .....	29,810 00	5,700 00	1,000 00
Agents and other Outside Employes .....	20,350 00	4,800 00	1,250 00
Education Department .....	13,250 00	4,150 00	
Railway Department .....	2,800 00		800 00

[To save space we are compelled to print only the totals.—ED.]

These figures, selected from "the Blue Books," tell their own tale, and no amount of special pleading on the part of Mr. Tarte will disturb their damaging evidence. Occasionally an English name is to be found in the lists, but it does not follow that the possessor is an Englishman. Take the case of Mr. Premier Ross as an example; there is no more ardent Frenchman than Mr. Ross, and few more highly esteemed by the English-speaking minority. But the state of things that prevails in the Provincial Government prevails all over the Province where the majority is French. "No English need apply" is rigidly carried out in every municipality. Let Mr. Tarte look at Montreal and its perpetual French mayor, notwithstanding the fact that the burden of the taxes are paid by Protestants, and then let him ask us to credit his fellow-countrymen with liberality. If all that has been said does not produce conviction, then turn to the Superior and Circuit Courts of Montreal, where there are some thirty-six persons employed in various positions of the public service. Out of these the Protestant minority is represented by two, at an aggregate salary of \$1,800. It is not travelling outside the record to say that three-fourths of the business transacted in these courts belongs to Protestant clients. Mr. Tarte was not well advised when he set up these pleas on behalf of the liberal treatment which is being meted out to the minority in this Province. The Protestants of Lower Canada are tolerably well satisfied that they have nothing to lose by a disruption of existing political arrangements, and they will certainly not be the ones to stand in its way.

NEMO.

\* For obvious reasons I have not included the Speaker's salary in this.