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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1874.

Spite of the predictions of the Opposition, spite even of Mr. MACKENZIE's declaration at Sarnia, and Mr. SCOTT's at Ottawa, the Government have produced a detailed scheme for the construction of the Pacific Railway. A full abstract of the measure will be found in our Ottawa letter. This change of policy on the part of the Administration is remarkable. It proves conclusively that the Premier did not venture to run counter to the emphatic and almost universal opinion of the country on this point. We know it for a fact that leading members of his party in this Province were opposed to the building of the railway as a needless expense which Canada should not incur. There is reason to believe that this view was shared by members of the party outside of the Province. Certainly, during the first few months after the advent to power of the present Government, the prevailing impression was that the project of the Pacific Railway would be quietly dropped. If such intention was ever entertained, the Ministry is to be congratulated on having reconsidered it. The railway, as we have often stated in these columns, is a condition *sine qua non* of our confederate existence and of our stability as a nation. It must be built, and that as expeditiously as is compatible with our finances. With regard to the present scheme, there is little to be said in advance of the debate which will take place upon it. In nearly every essential particular, it is based on the plan devised by the late Government, such alterations as are introduced looking mainly to stronger safeguards against monopoly and jobbing. The work being let to several companies by sections, instead of to a single company, must be regarded as an improvement, provided, as is promised in the Bill, every detail of the contracting be submitted to the ultimate control of Parliament. That the construction of the road will be slow appears evident from the nature of the dispositions to be taken, but that is a secondary consideration, so long as good faith is kept with the country and a proper regard is had to the requirements of the different sections. Strict partisans have professed alarm at the thirteenth clause of the Bill, which provides that the Governor, by Order in Council, shall have the right to determine the time when the works in each section or sub-section of the said railway shall be commenced, proceeded with, and completed; and shall have power at any time to suspend the progress of work until the then next session of Parliament. But we believe there is little cause for fear that Government will wield too much power in the premises. The example of the late Government is there to serve as a warning, and Mr. MACKENZIE knows full well that the eye of the country will be keenly fixed upon his course in this whole business. The Government are pledged to purity and to the strictest honesty in the handling of the public funds.

The testimony of Mr. John Lovell, the well-known publisher of this city, before the Manufacturing Committee of Parliament, affords the amplest and the clearest information we have yet seen respecting the unsatisfactory condition of the publishing trade of the Dominion, arising out of the want of a Canadian copyright. Mr. Lovell states that he published works of all classes, but had never reprinted, as he could not obtain permission. Since 1847, the Americans had commanded Canadian markets with ephemeral productions. At the present moment he was unable to reprint English works, or issue them in a cheap form, unless he copied the American editions. He said that the price of books was cheaper here than in the States, and cited "Foul Play," sold there for 75 cents, which he himself had sold for 25 cents. He admitted, however, that the paper was of a much superior kind, but he did not admit that that impaired the argument, as the people did not want superior paper. What he wanted was to be allowed to get the English copyright, print it here, and give an excise to the Govern-

ment, which should go to the copyright owner. Had the Canadian enjoyed the same privilege as the American, the business would have been doubled, and instead of one there would be hundreds now reading in the country. He showed the disadvantage under which Canadian publishers laboured from the American copyright being only extended to American citizens, while the latter might go to England, and by residing there at the time he copyrighted his manuscript, obtain a copyright of every corner of the British Dominion and flood this market with English copyright. He believed that English authors were willing enough that such arrangements should be made, and he attributed the opposition solely to the publishers. A draft of a bill had been submitted to the Colonial Office, which he had understood was to be the basis of a Canadian Act, which had entirely met his views on the subject. The consent of the publishers, however, had not as yet been obtained for the reciprocal powers named in the bill. With regard to the duty on paper, he considered a fixed tariff of 20 per cent. would not only cheapen the paper, but would stimulate the manufacture of finer grades. Fifteen per cent. hitherto had acted as a protection to the paper-makers. Mr. Lovell concluded by reiterating that unless he were allowed to reprint English works, and foreigners were stopped from entering our market, he should, notwithstanding his strong personal objections, leave this country and publish in the States.

Of all the ridiculously petty devices ever employed to cast odium upon a political adversary perhaps the most preposterous is that recently hit upon by a portion of the Opposition Press to bring the Premier into ill favour with the more strictly religious portion of the community. A great hue and cry has been raised by certain journals—at other times in no wise remarkable for puritanical asceticism—over the fact that Mr. MACKENZIE attended a dinner given by the Speaker of the House of Commons on a Sunday. Great stress is further laid on the circumstance of Archbishop TACHÉ having been present at this dinner, and the more rabid newspapers of the sectarian stripe point with horror at the fearful spectacle of a Protestant Premier giving his approval and countenance to such doings "by attending Sunday festivities with Romish Bishops and Priests, and those who believe that, after mass, the sacredness of the Sabbath ceases." "It certainly will be a novel doctrine to most Roman Catholics, which teaches that the sacredness of Sunday terminates with the hour of noon, and one to which very few of that Church would be at all willing to subscribe. It is true that in many Catholic countries a great deal of license exists in the matter of Sunday amusements, but the same thing may be said of many of the Protestant countries of Europe. Germany in this matter is no whit better than France. Leaving aside however the abstract questions of the propriety of Sunday diversions, and confining ourselves to the matter in point, it is somewhat difficult to understand the heinous nature of the offence for which the Premier is called to task. It is not such a very uncommon thing, we imagine, for a few friends to dine together on the Sabbath; yet we hear of no outcry being made against such a custom. And inasmuch as dinner is as much a necessity to the Premier, Archbishop TACHÉ, and the Speaker, as it is to the humblest and hungriest journalist, we see no reason why the three gentlemen should not take their meal in the company that suits them best. As to the objection to the Protestant Premier sitting down with Roman Catholics, it is worthy of Lord George Gordon himself, but it is too absurd to be entertained for a moment by any sane man. To cavillers of this kind it is always well to give a wide berth. There is a savour of Shylock about them when they use the Jew's own words, "I will walk with you, talk with you, and buy with you; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you."

An unbiased political journal, free from the trammels of party or sect, which while it discusses with all moderation the events of the day, fearlessly attacks wrongdoing, both in and out of office, is always a valuable addition to the periodical literature of a country. In Canada especially, where independent journalism is almost unknown, the establishment of such a journal is a fact upon which the reading public may well be congratulated. It has been frequently a subject of complaint, and with a great deal of reason, that the large majority of newspapers content themselves with reflecting the opinions of the leaders of the parties to which they may severally have attached themselves, and that, consequently, such a thing as fair, unprejudiced criticism might be sought after in vain in the columns of the press, both daily and weekly. We are pleased to see that this cause of reproach on Canadian journalism has at length been removed by the establishment in Toronto of *The Nation*, a weekly news-

paper which, while it professes to be mainly political in character, aims at perfect independence and impartiality in its criticisms. We have carefully read the first six numbers of the new candidate for popular favour, and have remarked with pleasure that the feature of complete independence in the discussion of political questions is carefully kept up. In its pages the reader will find the subjects of the day ably and vigorously treated with a thoroughness and a spirit of impartiality to which he has probably long been a stranger. In the interest of Canada and Canadian journalism we trust that the career of *The Nation* will be both long and successful.

It is some satisfaction to learn that the Hansard Committee of Parliament have anticipated the plan which we threw out last week for the compilation of the reports of debates. Our suggestion was two-fold—that the report should not be *verbatim*, but merely summary, and that the work should be entrusted to an official reporter, assisted by a competent staff. These two points are precisely those recommended by the Committee. The further details are that 2,000 copies are to be printed, 1,500 in sheet form and 500 bound. Six of the sheet Hansards are to be given each day to members, and one to each newspaper in the Dominion. Two of the bound copies are to be given to each member, and the remaining 88 to be for the library or for exchange. The Hansard in the sheet form is to be delivered each day, not later than 3 o'clock the day after the debate. The contractor for the Hansard is to be allowed to sell additional copies. The cost is estimated at \$7,984. Considering the smallness of this sum, it is a matter of regret that the Hansard was not begun in the first Parliament after Confederation.

Some weeks ago we had occasion to call the attention of the health officers to the practice which obtains in Western and Southern cities of placing a placard with the words "Small Pox" on the doors of the houses infected with that loathsome and dangerous disease. We are pleased to find their recommendation enforced by the Health Committee in their new regulations. They further propose that every child of three months and upwards be brought to the doctor to be vaccinated, and examined eight days afterwards, and a certificate obtained by the doctor according to law, whose fee shall not be more than fifty cents. The police shall also visit from house to house and obtain the name of unvaccinated children over three months. If the parents refuse within ten days, the child being in good health, a penalty to be imposed on conviction. Also, all teachers of schools before entering the children shall receive a document from them showing that they have been vaccinated.

The resistance of the ice-bridge at Quebec so long beyond the usual period suggests the necessity of employing more efficacious means than have been hitherto used to break through this barrier. It is absurd to wait for the action of three little steamers like the "Prince Edward," "Rescue," and "Champion" to open the bridge. Why not devise some powerful explosive means? Practical men believe that nitro-glycerine could be used with powerful force to blast the ice-floor. Why is it not tried? The amount of money lost by the destruction of ocean steamers and other craft at Island Cove is something very considerable indeed, and the general injury to trade by this unnatural delay is a serious drawback to the country.

The explanations given by the First Minister concerning the appointment of Mr. EDWARD JENKINS as agent general of the Dominion cannot be regarded as satisfactory. No valid reason was adduced for his selection which could not apply with equal force to a score of native Canadians whom we could name, and no excuse was attempted for his intemperate language at Dundee. Mr. JENKINS receives a salary of \$4,000, and is authorized to rent premises at £1,200 more. We insist that these emoluments should go to a native Canadian whose whole time would be devoted to the work. It is to be regretted that the Opposition did not protest against this ill-timed appointment with more emphasis.

The Parliamentary Committee on the shortest route to Europe are pursuing their investigations with praiseworthy diligence, under the direction of Hon. Dr. ROBERT TAILLÉ. So far the bulk of the evidence is in favour of Paspétiac Harbour, in the Baie des Chaleurs, as not only the best, but the sole winter port in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. It is entirely free from ice during the severest seasons and a capacious and sheltered mooring-ground for vessels of the largest tonnage. There was also evidence in favour of St. Andrews, Passamaquoddy Bay, and of Shippegan, but it is admitted that, during the winter, the latter would be closed up in the same manner as Montreal and Quebec.