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CURRENT TOPICS.

Unhappy France is still in the throes of the convulsion which so seriously threatens the life of the Republic. There is, however, reason to hope that she may be spared this dire calamity. It is probable that every day which now passes without precipitating the dreaded outbreak makes it more probable that she may escape the revolution which a few days since seemed imminent. It is in her favour that she is now bravely facing to the front, and that her gravest danger is the outcome of a determination to probe the festering sore of political corruption to the core. If her recuperative energy shall prove equal to the task of a thoroughly honest investigation and an equally thorough purification, it is possible that the present struggle may leave her institutions and administration on a higher moral plane than any hitherto attained.

Why ignore the Icelanders? This question is asked of the Census Department of the Canadian Government by the Heimskringla

Og Oldin, of Winnipeg, the organ of the Icelanders of the North-West, in its issue of the 14th inst. There are, it claims, certainly 10,000 Icelanders in Canada, and yet they are not deemed worthy of a separate column, though Italy and Spain, with only 2,851 representatives in the country, are given that honour. Our Icelandic contemporary, on thinking the matter over, comes to the conclusion that the Icelanders are partly counted as Scandinavians, of whom there are, according to the table, 7,826 in Canada; and partly under the heading of "Other Countries." "True enough," it says, "Iceland is not a sovereign state; but neither is Ireland nor Scotland, which are counted as separate countries. We Icelanders form a nationality of our own, with our own language and literature." The Icelanders are becoming, and are likely to become to a still greater extent, an important and desirable element in the population of the North-West, and no doubt the Census Department will give them the place to which they seem entitled in future enumerations.

From Ireland it is announced that Mr. Davitt's seat in Parliament has been declared vacant on the ground of undue influence by the clergy. From Quebec it is stated that the proprietors of the Canada Revue, one of the two journals which were recently placed under the ban of the Church, have taken or are about to take action, under the advice of an able lawyer who has been studying the question, against the Archbishop for damages. This is in both cases as it should be. If Mr. Davitt cannot be elected by the free suffrages of the people, he should not be elected at all. So, too, it is high time that it should be known whether every publisher of a newspaper for the French-speaking Canadians conducts it on sufferance of the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church. If the Canada Revue was guilty of malicious libel, the courts are open and the laws make ample provision for condign punishment. If, on the other hand, it simply performed its duty as a public journal in exposing gross wrongdoing under the garb of the priesthood, it is intolerable that an ecclesiastic should be permitted to launch the thunderbolts of the Church against it and destroy the legitimate business of its proprietors. The case will be watched with great interest, and it will be a happy omen for the Province of Quebec if the result shall be a vindication of the rights of a free press.

Municipal politics is not very much in our line, but we cannot be, and ought not to be, indifferent spectators of the annual elections of civic officers. Mayor Fleming is not, perhaps, the ideal mayor for a city like Toronto, but in the present instance we are unable to see any sufficient reason for wishing to have him superseded by the only opponent who has entered the lists against him. Mr. Fleming's record, as given in his speech on Monday—a speech marred by personalities which his friends might wish to blot out—certainly shows a good deal of

necessary, if not very showy, work done for the city during his term of office, and to a greater or less extent, through his instrumentality. He has proved himself to be economical and in the main thoroughly practical, in his ideas and aims. Mr. Sheppard's speeches—and, unfortunately perhaps for him, it is only by means of his speeches that we can judge of his fitness for the duties of the position to which he aspires—on the other hand, rather give us the impression of one whose eyes are turned towards the visionary and impracticable. Be that as it may, it is certain that he lacks that close knowledge of civic affairs which nothing but actual experience at the Council Board can give. For these and other reasons it seems tolerably certain that a majority of the citizens will prefer to bear the ills they have, so far as any of these may be the outcome of defects in the present Mayor's views and methods, rather than fly to others which they know not of, but which might result from putting an untried, and consequently unskilled, man in the civic chair for 1893.

The Labour Commission appointed by the British Government will shortly have completed its work. It has held 152 meetings, whole and sectional, and has examined 566 witnesses in London, besides holding local inquiries by means of assistants in the country. Its report will no doubt be a very interesting and important document. At a recent meeting some interesting evidence in regard to profit-sharing was given by Mr. Bushill, of the firm of Thomas Bushill and Sons, Printers, Bookbinders, etc., Coventry. Mr. Bushill said that, in 1878, "influenced by a Christian ministry, and by Ruskin's economic teaching," he doubted whether the wage system was justifiable, and was moved at a Bible-class meeting by a workman's remark that he did not believe in the charity of employers who built churches out of profits from bare-subsistence wages. After consultation a scheme was drawn up providing for interest at 5 per cent., partners' salaries, management, and risk, and for dividing the residue of profit among partners and employes. One-third of each man's share is paid in cash, and the remainder paid into a provident fund, which is part of the capital of the business, but duly secured. The men accepted the scheme, and it has worked satisfactorily. "From an employer's point of view the advantages are, less need of supervision, check against embezzlement, professional audit, improved tone among workers, less loss of time, less application for charity, and the moral satisfaction derived from the knowledge that hundreds of homes are brightened by the annual bonus." The firm's income is somewhat reduced, but Mr. Bushill did not think this a necessary accompaniment of any profit-sharing system.

The "apology for an apology"—the Independent suggests the characterization—which has recently been written by Father Corrigan,