

Prominent Topics.

Montreal's Referendum. On Monday, September 20, the electors of Montreal will be required to vote on the following three propositions:

"1. Are you in favour of the reduction of the number of Aldermen from two to one for each ward?"

"2. Are you in favour of a Board of Control elected by the people?"

"3. Are you in favour of a Commission of Public Works, appointed by the City Council?"

There is considerable to be said, and no doubt, will be said, for and against each of these propositions. That the general feeling of the community is in favour of a radical change, there is no doubt, but unless the reformers agree upon some definite policy in advance they are doomed to defeat. For instance, suppose that of every thousand voters who go to the polls, 300 vote for an elective Board of Control, 300 for an appointed Board of Works, and 400 vote against both propositions that is for maintaining the *status quo*; the 400 friends of the present system will outvote the 600 opponents, to whom it is intensely repugnant. The sensible policy would be to frankly discuss the *pros.* and *cons.* of both systems and agree upon one or the other in good season. We believe the electors are more likely to agree upon an elective Board of Control than they are upon a Board of Commissioners appointed by the aldermen. The results of a popular election, as applied to the choice of commissioners may be no more satisfactory than as applied to the selection of aldermen. The logical plan would be to trust the chosen representatives of the electors to appoint administrative experts. The objections to this are the uncertainty as to the nature of their choice and the danger that the board would not be sufficiently independent of its creators. The important thing, however, is to agree upon a definite policy before polling day.

Montreal Annual Industrial Exhibition.

The Exhibition project is meeting with every encouragement. It has been intimated that the Dominion Government will subscribe liberally to the enterprise and that the great railway companies are prepared to do their share. The administration is composed as follows:—

Honorary presidents—Hon. S. Fisher, minister of agriculture, Ottawa; Hon. Jules Allard, commissioner of agriculture, Quebec.

Board of directors—President, Hon. Sir George A. Drummond, president Bank of Montreal; vice-presidents, Hon. F. L. Beique, senator, and Mr. H. Laporte, ex-mayor of Montreal; secretary-treasurer, Mr. Henry Miles, president Montreal Business Men's League; Mr. L. Payette, mayor of Montreal, and Ald. L. A. Lapointe, Ald. L. A. Lavallee, Ald. J. Robinson and Ald. N. Giroux, representing the City of Montreal; Mr. H. A. Ekers, ex-mayor of Montreal, representing the Montreal Board of Trade; Mr. C. H. Catelli, representing La Chambre de Commerce; Hon. J. D. Rolland, representing Canadian Manufacturers' Association; Mr. H. G. Elliott, representing Grand Trunk Railway Company; Mr. A. H. Harris, representing Canadian Pacific Railway Company; Mr. W. G. Ross, representing Montreal Street Railway Company; Col. A.

E. Labelle, representing the Corn Exchange Association; Mr. Robert Bickerdike, M.P.; Mr. R. Wilson-Smith, ex-mayor of Montreal; Mr. T. Gauthier, representing Council of Arts and Manufacturers; Dr. Lalonde, representing the Agricultural Societies of the province.

Aerial Navigation. Aerial navigation has made more spectacular and also more substantial progress in the last two or three months than in all previous time. The collapse of the Silver Dart at the Petewawa Camp, was but an annoying sequel to a successful demonstration. It may also be regarded as an indication that Canada, thanks to the inventive genius of Dr. Graham Bell and the skill and pluck of Messrs. McCurdy and Baldwin, promises to hold her own in the international competition for the conquest of the air. Last year THE CHRONICLE predicted that within ten years air-ships of one kind or another would become as common as automobiles were then. Had we to modify the prediction, to-day we would guess five years instead of ten. Aerial navigation has advanced even more rapidly and radically than gasoline rapid transit. It is notable that nearly all the accidents in aerial navigation have been caused by defects in the motors, which of necessity have to possess a maximum of power with a minimum of weight; which is also a desideratum in connection with automobiles. There is a general looking to Orange, New Jersey, for a solution of this, one of the most practical problems of modern science.

Awakening of Siberia. The Journal of the Canadian Bankers' Association contains an article on the Awakening of Siberia which should interest a circle of readers much wider than the banking profession. As the journal editorially remarks, if Canadian manufacturers are in search of fresh fields of trade and enterprise, it would be well for them to support the suggestion of Mr. Lethbridge that a commissioner be appointed to report on the possibility of developing Canadian trade with Siberia.

"As a market for manufactured goods Siberia seems to be as promising as our Canadian North West, for the Russians have at last realized that Siberia, hitherto known only 'as the home of the convict and the exile, land of ice and snow and extreme desolation,' is a country of bountiful harvests, religious toleration and immune from revolutionary and labour troubles."

Connecticut Blue-Laws. The Connecticut Legislature has passed an Act abrogating the Blue-Laws with reference to Sunday; including one imposing a fine of \$4 upon every person attending a concert or entertainment on the Lord's Day. The new Act prohibits all sports and secular activities on Sunday "except such as are demanded by necessity and mercy, and such as are for the general welfare of the community." There is a beautiful elasticity about the exception, which has not been beaten since Sir Oliver Mowatt passed his Act forbidding horse-racing, but permitting "trials of speed." The general impression is that Sunday baseball is included under the good works necessary to the general welfare of the community, an impression which is not shared by Archbishop Bruchesi.