

PROMINENT TOPICS.

PEACE CONFERENCE.—President Roosevelt has achieved a diplomatic triumph of the highest importance by inducing Russia and Japan to make arrangements for a Conference to discuss terms of peace. Where this meeting will be held is not yet known, nor is it known who will be the plenipotentiaries of each power. The probability is, that the Conference will be held at the Hague, which is already associated with a peace movement initiated years ago by the present Czar.

In his letter to the rulers of Russia and of Japan. President Roosevelt made a new departure in several respects. Communications between the authorities of one country and another are accustomed to be carried on through the medium of their respective ambassadors or other representatives. Such communications are kept most secret, they are expressed in the terms customary in the diplomatic service, which are proverbially lacking in frankness. The art of verbal "hedging" is a necessary accomplishment for a diplomatist.

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S HISTORIC LETTER to the Czar and Mikado was written in the style of business, he went at once direct to the point, he stated the object of his appeal in words of gravity and clearness. The extreme desirability of putting an end to so terrible a slaughter of human life was forcibly urged and presented as his excuse for interfering between the powers at war. He made no offer to act as intermediary, but, in most felicitous, because most frank and straightforward language, he suggested that each power appoint plenipotentiaries to confer together directly, without the presence of any representative of a third power, so that their deliberations respecting the terms of peace, so universally desired by all the other nations, could be carried on uninfluenced by any outside power.

This appeal, so dignified, so transparently clear, so unselfish, so direct, and we may say, so business like, was promptly responded to. The Conference, as suggested, will take place and the whole civilized world is hopefully anticipating that the result will be a proclamation of peace between Russia and Japan.

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DANGER OF DELAY.—That "delays are dangerous" is notorious, the danger is most serious of delay in bringing the two powers together to settle terms of peace. Both armies are reported to be ready for a decisive battle. The Japs are said to be enveloping their foes, and just now it will be for both armies extremely depressing to have their enthusiasm dissipated by standing at ease waiting for the results of the Conference. Awful as the results would be, in some respects a decisive engagement would end

the war more satisfactorily than a conference, that is, if the Russian army were defeated. If it were victorious the war would probably be prolonged. The battle of Trafalgar, though, as a naval fight decisive, was followed by ten years of war on land, so the destruction of the Russian fleet is not necessarily an assurance of Russia's desire for peace. The present suspense, we trust, will be soon over and both combatants set free to pursue a career of political and commercial prosperity.

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A WARNING UNHEEDED.—Well for Russia would it have been, had the warning and advice of Prince Meshtstersky, uttered a year ago, been heeded. He said, "Russia has work enough to do at home without squandering her money in gadding after a will o' the wisp in the far East in pursuance of schemes that way make ruin."

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A GLASGOW EXPERT ON MUNICIPAL STREET RAILWAYS.—The Mayor of Chicago invited Mr. Dalrymple, one of the managers of the city of Glasgow's street railway, which is a municipal enterprise, to visit Chicago to give his advice as to the system being adopted there. He has been, has investigated the local conditions, and has gone away with the conviction that there are circumstances existing in Chicago which, in his judgment, would prevent a municipal street railway being a success, or, indeed, any municipal enterprise.

Those circumstances arise from the American custom of dominating all public matters and projects and works with political influences. Instead of the street railway being run, as in Glasgow, strictly on business lines by a Council of first class citizens, in Chicago it would be run by a very inferior class of officials in the interest of the dominant political party. Such being the case, Mr. Dalrymple hesitates to recommend Chicago, as a city, working its own railway system.

He gave details as to the Glasgow plan which would not be popular in Montreal. The fares are not uniform for the whole distance covered by one trip, considering too the length of the trips which may be taken in this city, and other places in Canada, for one fare the Glasgow charge is no lower than here.

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A DEFAULTING AMERICAN BANKER'S SENTENCE.—F. G. Bigelow, who robbed the First National Bank of Milwaukee, of which he was president, was tried last week and sentenced to 10 years hard labor in the penitentiary. Another 10 year sentence was recorded against him to run concurrently with the other. Whether and when the punishment will be enforced is another matter, as there may be appeals from one Court to another that will practically annul the sentence.

It would be quite impossible for the president of any bank in Canada to commit such a crime as has