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Canada's Prosperity. The banking and miscellaneous business statistics of Canada continue to show that the Dominion presents one of the world's cheerful visions of prosperity. During the last five years the Canadian people have grown in wealth unprecedentedly. The growth of the country is shown by the fact that the chartered banks opened about a hundred and ten new branches during 1902. It is noticed that during the last few years the imports have grown from \$111,000,000 to \$212,000,000, and that the exports have grown from \$133,000,000, to \$211,000,000. The Government issues the following percentages of trade increase to demonstrate that Canada "leads the procession": Canada 96.05; Japan 84.06; Australian Commonwealth 62.21; United States 48.08; Netherlands 43.08; Italy 39.0; United Kingdom 27.77; France 18.16; Spain 3.65; Cape Colony 2.62. Further, Canada's trade, during 1902, per capita of population figure a little over \$77, that of the United States, at between \$30 and \$31; Great Britain, \$102; France, between \$51 and \$54; Germany, about \$41. This certainly looks well for Canada.

The Irish Land Bill. The Irish Land Bill has passed its first stage in the British House of Commons. Judging from the kindly reception given it by the leading Irish Nationalists and Liberals, it will apparently go through as a non-contentious bill. The main features of the measure follow closely the agreement entered into between the landlords and tenants at their recent conference. A free grant of \$60,000,000 is given for the purchase of Irish estates by tenants living upon them. Tenants are to pay 3% per cent. interest on loans from the Government. Advances to tenants are to be limited to \$2,500 in the congested districts and \$3,000 elsewhere. Provision is made for borrowing \$500,000,000 on the security of the land, which is, Mr. Wyndham thinks, ample security for \$750,000,000. The advances to the tenants will be in the shape of cash and not of stock, but in order to raise the 500,000,000, a new stock will be floated to be called "guaranteed 2 3/4 per cent. stock, redeemable in thirty years. The \$60,000,000 free grant is to be raised by addition to the stock, the maximum annual charge of which will be less than \$1,950,000. But what makes the bill seem like a brilliant triumph of financiering is that against this charge on the Treasury, the Government expects to reduce the cost of Irish Administration by some \$1,250,000, owing to the greater contentment of the people. How far the bright anticipations held out will be realized, will now depend solely on the tenants themselves. If they are thrifty and devote themselves to the improvement of their lands, things will come out all right.

The Curse of Central Africa. There is a desperate struggle in London to prevent the publication of a work bearing the above title and giving some glances into the darkest scenes of the dark continent. It is said, that the King of Belgium has protested to the British Government against its publication. Missionaries have for years been repeating the tale of the horrors inflicted upon the poor native by the Belgian Government. The book is written by two men of position, who have withdrawn in disgust from the employ of the Congo Free State Company. The book describes the method adopted by the Congo Free State to force the natives to work for the company, which is exploiting the rubber forests. The natives are not held in slavery, but are made to wear metal badges which bear the record of their contributions of rubber to the company. A native who has not brought a sufficient

amount to satisfy the officers is flogged or otherwise tortured. When it is necessary to maintain effective terror on the part of the natives whole villages are killed off. Some of the tortures include death through slow dismemberment. The treatment of the black laborers in the diamond and gold mines of the South African Rand is bliss compared with these atrocities. It is high time for the powers that have made the agreement, which renders the Congo Free State the possession of Belgium, should put a stern negative on all these cruel proceedings.

Aerial Mail. Signor Piscicelli, a scientist of Rome, has invented a mechanism for carrying letters and parcels which is so novel and promises such good results, that the Italian government is seriously thinking of using it throughout the country in place of the present mail service. Two reasons are given for the proposed change, one is, that mail may be transmitted at a speed of two hundred and fifty miles an hour, and the other reason is, because it is calculated that the system could be established throughout Italy at a cost of about \$700 per mile, and the government would save thereby several million dollars. The scheme is to have double wires strung at a height of forty-five feet above the ground and to have as vehicles, boxes containing the mail and which which are to be rolled along the wires. The boxes are to be upon rollers, which will fit closely to the wires, and the post supporting the wires are to be three hundred feet apart. Moreover, the boxes are to be made of aluminum, and when filled, must not weigh more than seventy pounds each. The exact manner in which these boxes are to be propelled has not yet been divulged, but it is supposed they will be provided with electric motors. It is estimated that four thousand boxes could be started on their journey every hour, a distance of one hundred yards being left between each.

Castro's Resignation. The resignation of Mr. Castro, as President of Venezuela, came as a surprise to the civilized world. The Venezuelan Congress has refused to accept President Castro's resignation, and his answer to this has not yet been given. It was feared, that his resignation would put an end to the agreements entered into by Venezuela with the foreign powers; but it is now stated authoritatively, that it would not interfere with these proceedings. The question of preference demanded by the powers, that took an active part in the blockade, will still go to the Hague Court. It is understood, that President Castro's reason for tendering his resignation was to rebuke England, Germany, and Italy, by showing them, that the country would give him a vote of confidence, in spite of their insinuations, that he was the sole cause of Venezuela's humiliation. There have been reports of a banking syndicate offering to take over the debts of Venezuela and to pay the allies, for which the custom house receipts were to be the consideration. Even though Mr. Castro insists upon resigning, it is thought, that his brother will be the titular President, while Castro himself remains in real control. [Since the above was written it has been learned that the resignation will not take effect until after the negotiations with the Powers are completed.]

The Next Great Railroad. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Co. has applied to Parliament for incorporation, with a capital stock of \$75,000,000. It is stated that, the Grand Trunk would not think of running their line for hundreds of miles through an unsettled country for less than ten to fifteen thousand dollars a mile. The maximum subsidy allowed to other railways in

Canada of recent years has been 6,400, and that only where the cost of construction was exceptionally large. Everywhere, all through Canada comes the demand, that no more subsidies be given to railways, that Canada has squandered far too much land and money on them already, and that we have now come to a stage of development, when railways should be left to private enterprise. The United States for the last twenty years has not given subsidies for the construction of railways. The next great railroad will be, perhaps, the question of greatest general interest to be discussed in Parliament this session. Thus the discussion of the transportation question by a Cabinet minister, Sir William Mulock, at a Liberal banquet, in Toronto, on March 23, is of unusual interest and importance. Mr. Mulock referred to the rapid advancement of the West during the last few years, and estimated the population of Manitoba and the North West as over 3,250,000 by 1907. He said, that if the existing railways are insufficient for the present traffic, what is to become of the traffic of double the number of people. To understand the situation, we must remember that there is a gap of over 1,000 miles of unsettled territory, between Old Canada and Manitoba. If the east and west are to trade together to their mutual benefit, if the United States is not to be allowed to grasp and keep the trade, we must build more railways. But on what principle? Capitalists unassisted will not build, it appears. From the trend of Mr. Mulock's speech, it would seem that the Government were planning on giving the Grand Trunk a cash subsidy, on condition of providing an all Canadian route with their eastern terminus in Canada.

The Subsidy Raid. Upon the confederation of Canada, the only powers given to the Provinces for the purpose of raising money, were "direct taxation within the Province," licences and subsidies paid by the Dominion Government. The specific subsidy paid to Ontario, is \$80,000; Quebec, \$70,000; Nova Scotia, \$60,000; New Brunswick, \$50,000; Manitoba, \$50,000; British Columbia, \$35,000; and P. E. I. \$30,000. In addition to these specific subsidies, the Provinces are allowed an equal grant of eighty cents a head of their population. The Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, are reckoned according to the census of 1861, and that of the other Provinces by the last decennial census. The subsidy of eighty cents a head was granted to the Provinces, in consideration of the transfer to the Dominion of their custom and excise duties. Since the census of 1861, however, the population of Ontario has increased by 786,856, and that of Quebec by 537,332; while the revenue of the federal government, of which \$11,580,968, out of a total \$13,687,963, was from custom and excise duties in 1868, has increased to \$71,029,934 in 1899, of which the sum of \$38,245,233 was for excise and customs duties. Under these circumstances, the Premiers of the various Provinces met at Quebec, from the 18th to 20th of December, 1902, and passed resolution appealing to the Dominion Government to establish a new basis of distribution, as the Provinces have not enough money to carry on their Governments satisfactorily. The effect of these resolutions would be to increase the total per capita subsidies from \$2,870,939 to \$4,129,774 or 56 per cent., apportioning it amongst the Provinces on the basis of population. The increase of the total specific subsidies asked for is from \$375,000 to \$1,170,000, or 212 per cent. The total increase of specific and per capita subsidies would be more than \$2,000,000. It is expected that these resolutions will be brought before the Legislative Assemblies of each of the Provinces and adopted.