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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

WHATEVER may be the legal validity of the objections taken before the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with a view to prevent the crossing of its track by the Portage extension of the Red River Valley Railway, from the point of view of every dispassionate lay observer, the move must seem extremely ill-advised and vexatious. Whether there is anything in the point said to be taken by the Attorney-General of Manitoba, that the clause of the Dominion Act appealed to on behalf of the Canadian Pacific is *ultra vires*, is a question for judicial authorities to decide. But surely it cannot be supposed that any Province of the Dominion would submit to be debarred from the right of building a local railway which it judged necessary for the development of its resources, because it happened to be necessary for such road to cross a railway chartered by the Dominion Government. Such a supposition seems to carry absurdity on its face. No one, having in mind the temper displayed by Manitoba in the previous struggle for the construction of the Red River Valley Railway, can for a moment suppose that the Province will suffer itself to be baulked by such an obstacle as that now raised. If the Canadian Pacific Railway pushes its objection and it is sustained, the obnoxious clause will have to be changed at the next session of Parliament. It is inconceivable that another claim for compensation could be based on such a change, seeing it could result in no material damage to the objecting road, save that involved in the loss of its monopoly, and for this it has already received compensation. On the other hand, persistence in such obstructive tactics would be sure to create in Manitoba a feeling of hostility to the great transcontinental railway, which must redound more or less to its injury, and which would be, in any case, greatly to be deplored.

THE Minister of Justice, in a recent speech, brought some arithmetical calculations to bear on the discussion of the veto question. During the past twenty-one years, he informed his audience, the Quebec Legislature has passed 2,000 statutes, and of these but four have been disallowed. During the last twenty years the various Legislatures of the Dominion have passed nearly 10,000 statutes, and of these only sixty-five have been vetoed. These figures, striking though they are, are scarcely so conclusive as might at first thought be supposed? What is the character of the great mass of the 2,000, and the 10,000 statutes? Would it be too much to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred relate to matters so purely local that the idea of the Federal Government having anything to do with them would be simply intolerable? The real, vital question is, What proportion of the bills that are of Provincial importance and magnitude have been interfered with? It is easy to see that the rights of local autonomy involved, the Provincial interests at stake in the hundredth bill may cause it to far outweigh the whole ninety and nine. Figures have their legitimate place in argument, but it is easy to see that the fact of nine hundred and ninety-nine bills, about which no possible question of jurisdiction could be raised, having been allowed to pass unchallenged could not have a feather's weight as an offset to the disallowance of the one thousandth, if that disallowance was a real infringement of a Provincial right. The constitutional question cannot be settled by arithmetic.

THE Quebec veto question has been shelved, for the present at least, by Premier Mercier's submission to the disallowance. The effect of this overthrow of the Magistrates' Court Bill has been to some extent counteracted by the establishment of a Magistrates' Court in Montreal under the Act of 1869, which has not been and cannot now be disallowed. The new court thus created has concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit Court, which is, of course, re-established by the failure of the bill which provided for its abolition, to the extent of $50, instead of the $200 which was to have been the limit of jurisdiction for the Magistrates' Court created by the defunct bill. The salaries provided by the Act of 1869 are only $1,200, but these will, it is said, be increased at the next session of the Legislature to the figure fixed in the vetoed bill. It is, moreover, stated that the Circuit Court will be abolished, and the powers of the Magistrates' Court extended; in other words, that the vetoed bill will be re-enacted at the approaching session. It is difficult, however, to see what advantage can be gained in this way, or why the second veto, which would no doubt await it, would be less efficacious than the first, save on the supposition that the Dominion Government will take warning from the excitement aroused, and refrain from a second trial of strength with the Quebec authorities.

THE School Hygiene Committee of the Toronto Board of Health recently presented a report on public school sanitation, which should be pressed on the attention of every school teacher and school board in the Province. It requires but a little reflection to convince any one that the opportunities for the spread of disease germs afforded by the public schools are unique. Nowhere else are so many individuals obliged to pass five or six hours of every day in single rooms and in so close proximity to each other. With "dirty floors and badly ventilated school rooms," which, it may be feared, are still rather the rule than the exception, the prime conditions for the spread of disease germs have the fullest and freest scope for operation. It is to be hoped that the Education Department will adopt some means for the vigorous enforcement of the more important recommendations of the report, which is, we believe, to be issued by it as a circular to trustees.

THE ripple of excitement caused by the publication of Mr. Erastus Wiman's letter to the Canadian press, announcing that the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations was about to report a resolution to the Senate, making it the duty of the President to open a negotiation with Great Britain for the admission of Canada into the Union, was slight and short lived. Though Mr. Wiman's subsequent communications show that he still believes such a movement to have actually been under consideration in the Senate Committee, it seems almost incredible that such could have been the case. Whatever their national prejudices, the members of that Committee are surely shrewd politicians, able to forecast the probable effects of an overture of that kind upon the parties concerned. The proposition would have been so extraordinary in itself and the time chosen for it so inopportune, that to have made it formally would have been, from the point of view of the United States, a *faux pas* of the most awkward character. Great Britain, it is pretty well known, is not much