

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1874.

The Proprietor of this paper, Mr. George E. Desbarats, has been obliged to go into insolvency. He had hoped to recover from the heavy losses incurred in the early stages of this publication, some of which are natural to all similar new enterprises. And latterly, he endeavoured to form a company to carry on the business, and thereby relieve himself of a part of the load, mental and financial, he was carrying. But undue pressure in certain quarters has forced him, before this plan was completely realised, to protect himself and his creditors under the provisions of the Insolvent Act. Should he be enabled to regain possession of the business, he is confident that its present efficient state, and its powers of production, may enable him, in time, and with industry and perseverance, not only to recuperate, but to reimburse those whom his failure may temporarily affect. Meanwhile, his creditors understand the impossibility of stopping for a single week such important publications as the *Canadian Illustrated News*, *The Favorite*, *L'Opinion Publique* and the *Patent Office Record*, without loss to all concerned, and the business will suffer no interruption. We therefore request a continuance of the public confidence and support, and, on our part, we will strive to improve our publications in every respect and to deserve the cooperation of every true Canadian.

Another of those terrible railway accidents which result in loss of life and cast a gloom over the country occurred last week. The scene was on the line of the Great Western Railway, midway between London and Komoka. On Saturday evening the Sarnia express left the former place at twenty minutes past six, with several petroleum and baggage cars and one coach crowded with passengers. About midway between London and Komoka station, an oil lamp in the closet fell from where it was suspended to the floor, and was broken. In a moment the oil ignited and the whole interior of the closet was on fire. A panic at once seized the passengers, and efforts were made to stifle the flames by the use of cushions, but it was found useless. The great speed at which the train was going, reckoned at over 30 miles an hour, fanned the fire to such a degree that no hope was left but an immediate stoppage of the train. But there being no bell-rope attached, no communication could be passed, until Conductor Mitchell, at much personal risk, ran forward and gave the word. By this time the fire had gained full sway, and the affrighted passengers were throwing themselves headlong from the platform and out of the windows which they smashed for the purpose. In a few minutes the car was consumed, and those who could not escape were burned to a crisp. Such is the account given of the disaster in the morning papers of Monday last. Seven persons, it appears, lost their lives, and twelve were injured, seven seriously. It is only natural to expect that such an accident as this—if accident it can be called—will be made the subject of an enquiry instituted by the Government. It is to be hoped that the investigation will be more thorough than such investigations are wont to be and that the parties who are responsible for the disaster will be made to understand that they cannot with impunity trifle with the lives of the public. After all there is very little to sift, and the duties of those appointed to examine the matter will be mainly confined to discovering the individuals to whom the blame attaches. It is pretty clear that the disaster is due in the first place to the insecurity of the lamp in the closet of the burnt car. Everyone accustomed to travelling by rail must have noticed the careless manner in which the oil lamps are frequently fastened, and how liable they are to being upset by the jolting of the cars. It is only surprising that accidents of the nature of that which occurred at Komoka are not more frequent. In this case, however, the disaster might have been limited to the partial destruction of the car had it not been for the unaccountable absence of the bell-rope which usually connects the whole train with the engine. Had this rope been in its place there would have been no difficulty in communicating with the engine driver and stopping the train before much damage was done. It certainly is a very extraordinary thing, whether it be of frequent occurrence or not, that a train should be allowed to leave any station without the indispensable apparatus for communication. As well might a vessel be allowed to sail from port without life-saving apparatus. The person who is guilty of the culpable piece of negligence which has led to the loss of seven lives has a heavy weight of responsibility at his door. There is yet another feature in the Komoka disaster to which we would draw attention, viz., the dangerous custom of attaching petroleum cars to passenger trains. This should be distinctly prohibited by law under

heavy penalties in cases of infraction. There are dangers enough already attendant on railway travel, without adding new and cunningly invented perils to risk the unfortunate traveller's life and limbs. Until our railway system is established on a completely new basis, or the European principle is adopted, which insists on the highest penalty being visited on the person or persons responsible for accidents involving loss of life, we despair of seeing railway traffic in this country conducted with anything like due regard for the safety of passengers. One accident may occur after another, all causing loss of life, and still the lesson will not be learned. The Komoka disaster, like those that have gone before it, will be a subject of interest and indignation for the usual nine days, and will then drop out of sight. It might be different had there been a couple of dozen railway directors, a sprinkling of members of Parliament, and one or two Cabinet Ministers on board the ill-fated Sarnia train. But in that case the bell-rope would have been in its place.

At the dinner given last week by the Cabinet to the Delegates of the Dominion Board of Trade, Mr. Huntington, the Chairman, expressed a wish that merchants, and commercial men in general, should devote themselves more to politics. We think the retort courteous might be made to the Hon. President of the Council. Mercantile men might reply that it were more to the purpose if politicians applied themselves more to a knowledge of the commercial wants of the country. Much less politics and a better acquaintance with the practical requirements of a new people like ours are, indeed, much to be desired. That the Delegates of the Dominion Board of Trade, at their last annual meeting, more particularly, were alive to this fact is matter of sincere congratulation. The ability displayed in the discussions was certainly very marked, while the range of subjects occupying the attention of the Board testified to their knowledge of our national wants and their zeal for their country's welfare. Clear, practical views were expressed on such important topics as the Insolvency Laws, Insurance, the Inspection Act, Reciprocity, the Fisheries, Inland Communication, and the Tariff. The latter question, hinging as it does on political issues, especially in the present altered condition of the Government, was treated in a business-like spirit, and was brought to a point which must be regarded as particularly significant. The present tariff is known to be drafted on an average of fifteen per cent. The Free-traders, feeling that they could not reasonably ask a reduction of that figure, and being naturally opposed to any increase of the same, opened the debate by proposing the maintenance of the present tariff, with the proviso that, in the event of an increase of revenue being required, it should be raised by an increase of duties on articles that are luxuries and not necessities of life. The Protectionists, on the other hand, brought forward a proposition to the effect that a tariff of twenty per cent, instead of fifteen, was necessary in order to afford proper protection to the manufactures of the country. A long discussion ensued in support of one or the other of these motions. The speeches were rather distinguished for earnestness and special knowledge, according as the speakers represented different manufacturing or commercial interests, than for a broad or profound grasp of the subject, but they made patent the fact that the majority of the Board was in favour of moderate protection. But this was not sufficient. It was made known that the revenue of the last fiscal year was \$6,000,000 less than the revenue of the previous year, and that, in fact, for the first time since the establishment of Confederation, there was a deficit in the Canadian revenue. That deficit had to be made up during the approaching session of Parliament. Should the Board memorialize Parliament to do this by raising the tariff to twenty per cent, as the Protectionists wanted, or by retaining the present *ad valorem* rates and increasing the duty on luxuries, as the Free-traders advised? It was finally resolved to drop any specific figures, and leave the whole matter to the wisdom of Parliament, on the distinct understanding, however, that the principle of protection to manufacturers' industry should be embodied as a groundwork in any revision of the tariff. In other words, Government and Parliament are given to understand that the representatives of the commerce and wealth of the whole Dominion are pledged to a protective policy. Considering the known leanings of the Government towards free trade, the declaration is timely, and there is reason to believe that it will prove potential. Under the circumstances we may express ourselves satisfied. But, things being equal, and the former Government being in power, we should have preferred a more precise and outspoken opinion from the Board, who, considering their standing, have an undeniable right to speak with authority on all questions coming within their sphere.

The strange, dramatic, wearisome Tichborne trial is over. After a duration of one hundred and eighty days, it resulted in the claimant being convicted of perjury and immediately sentenced to fourteen years of penal servitude. From many points of view, the conclusion of this case may be regarded as a great relief. It decides, with almost the force and clearness of a demonstration, the unparalleled audacity of the knave who palmed himself off as a scion of English aristocracy and the heir of one of the oldest patrimonies in Britain. It rehabilitates the reputation of a virtuous married lady from the slur of unchastity. It frees the English courts from a growing imputation of charlatanism and ridiculous adherence to mere forms. It saves a considerable portion of the English people from a further exhibition of morbid sympathy for bare-faced rascality. And finally, though not least, it relieves our English exchanges from the daily incubus of eight or nine columns of matter relating to the transactions of the trial. So absorbing was the interest manifested in the case that this report had to be regularly published to the exclusion of far more important matters. The two Tichborne trials will remain among the most famous on record. The burly figure of the claimant bids fair to be long remembered not only in judicial annals, but in grotesque legend and ballad as well. Much of his fame will also doubtless be due to his native cleverness, for none but a man of singular ability could have carried himself through two such ordeals with so few breaks in his chain of consistency. The issues which the case provoked in its progress are likewise curious as psychological manifestations. The active and zealous interference of Mr. Whalley, out of pure religious fanaticism, is remarkable as illustrating the existence of an old leaven of intolerant bitterness, not at all creditable to the good sense of the English people. What will add to the interest of the case, in a legal and literary point of view, is the connection of Sir John Coleridge and Chief Justice Cockburn therewith. The speech of the late Solicitor-General in the first trial was a marvel of clear analysis, logical shrewdness, and elegant diction. It led to the complete breaking down of the case and the withdrawal of Sergeant Balfour from any further participation in it. The summing up of Lord Cockburn in the second trial, just closed, is described as singularly impressive, and it reads as a master-piece of straightforward, uncompromising, inexorable presentment of truth, stripped of every disguise and accretion. It carried conviction to the mind of every hearer, and it is no wonder that the jury should have retired for only a few moments prior to returning with an unanimous verdict of guilty. The statement is made that, after the verdict was announced, the claimant expressed a desire to address the Court, and that a movement is already on foot to have an appeal. But it is hardly to be credited that fanatical votaries will subscribe any more money to this scandalous case. It is rather to be expected that the "Tichborne Bonds" will drift rapidly into the collection of curiosities, as monuments of human folly and religious bigotry.

When the Ministry came into power in November last we heard a great deal about the promptness they were going to display in the conduct of public affairs. Oh, where is that promptness now? Gone away, like Hans Breitmann's "Barty," "away in die Ewigkeit." The Estimates were to have been brought down in November. They were not brought down, but they would be ready for the meeting of the House in January. In January the House did not meet. Then we were to have them in March. And now, alas for the fallacy of human hopes, we are once more put off—to April. The promptness was evidently meant in a Pickwickian sense, but then no one was prepared to see the Premier, of all men, making his appearance in the character of a humourist.

The doctors are at their old games—falling out again. There is war—war to the scalpel—between the Allopaths and the children of Hahnemann, and outsiders, such at least as enjoy good health, are laughing at the belligerents. For sick people the spectacle must be anything but reassuring.

"Procrastination is the thief of time." Can that be so applied as to mean that the procrastination of the Ministry in the matter of calling Parliament together will prove the thief that will rob them of their time—in office. It certainly does look as if they thought so.

Here is a chance for the Ministry to act up to their principles. Let them reform our railway system. It is bad enough in all conscience, and cries loud enough for improvement to be seen and heard by the blindest and deafest of reformers.

MARRIED.

TAYLOR—SMALLWOOD.—On Tuesday, the 17th ult., at Christ Church Cathedral, by the doctor, assisted by the Rev. Canon Bancroft, D.D., Reid Taylor, Esq., advocate, to Mattie, youngest daughter of the late Charles Smallwood, Esq., M.D., LL.D., D.C.L. The happy couple left for the South immediately after the marriage.