

The Colonist

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1889.

MR. LAURIER'S SPEECH.

The speech which the Hon. Mr. Laurier delivered in Toronto on the last day of last month was well received. The audience was large and intelligent and, on one of the subjects which it was the duty of the leader of the Opposition to speak, not easily pleased. But it is evident that he made a good impression. The greater part of his address to the young Liberals of the city of Toronto was a plea for mutual forbearance and tolerance in matters of religion. His task was a difficult one. The public mind of Ontario has been excited on the Jesuits' Estates Act, and much has been said and written to prejudice its English-speaking and Protestant inhabitants against their fellow-subjects of French extraction. The agitator is not content to find to one denomination or one party. Those who are influenced by it profess many religions and belong to both the Conservative and the Reform parties. It can be well understood that Mr. Laurier's audience was disposed to be critical, and that it was necessary for him, a French Canadian and a Catholic, to be exceedingly careful both as to what he said and what he left unsaid. But Mr. Laurier was equal to the task he undertook. There is perhaps no speaker in the Dominion better fitted to perform the difficult and delicate duty of peacemaker. His manner is exceedingly pleasing and conciliatory. He is one of the very few men in Parliament who can win the applause from both sides of the House. He well deserves the title that has been applied to him of being Canada's "silver-tongued orator." Besides being a gentle man of peculiarly attractive address he leaves the impression on the hearer of being thoroughly honest and sincere. He is an animated speaker, and his cheerful and unassuming manner is happy. When such a man as this undertakes to prove to the people of Toronto that it was their interest and their duty to live at peace with their neighbors and that no good object could be gained by making religious differences causes of discord, it would be indeed singular if he did not, to some extent, produce the result he intended. The subject was not, strictly speaking, a party one. His exhortation to peace and good will did not arouse party spirit which is always so active in Ontario and so ready to take fire at a half word. He had with him in his desire to calm those who had been unduly excited by recent quasi-religious discussions, and to bring about a better understanding and a more cordial feeling between Protestants and Catholics in Ontario and other parts of the Dominion, the approval and good wishes of the moderate men of both parties. The Conservatives of Ontario are just as anxious to see religious questions eliminated from politics as are the Reformers. They want to see political questions discussed in the Dominion free from the disturbing and blinding influences of religious strife. They know that when men are quarrelling about matters in which religion is involved, no question of pure politics stands any show of being rationally discussed and fairly decided upon. Consequently the deeper the impression that Mr. Laurier might make in his character of peacemaker between religious denominations and races the better a very large number of the Conservatives of the Dominion will be pleased.

THE LIBERAL PROGRAMME.

The supporters of the present Administration were the more disposed to listen to Mr. Laurier on the religious question, so-called, and to desire that he would succeed in clearing the public mind of religious jealousies and prejudices as there was really nothing in the political part of his speech to give them the least uneasiness. His criticisms on the policy and the conduct of the government were not by any means severe or calculated to stimulate the zeal of the Liberal party in Ontario, or anywhere else, and the "programme" of the Liberal party, from a political point of view, as innocuous as the programme of the Conservative party as a programme can be.

Mr. Laurier said: "This is the programme of the Liberal party: To obtain commercial freedom of trade. That is our programme at the moment. But, gentlemen, others of you will say, that is the only question there are other questions pressing for solution? Yes, gentlemen, there are other questions, and important questions too, that concern the welfare of the people; but as I read history, one great reform at a time is as much as a party can effect; and if we fit our eyes steadily on one reform and devote all our energies to its accomplishment, success will certainly crown our efforts at no distant day. Let our eyes steadily upon the goal, we shall go on steadily until we reach it. Unquestioned Commercial Reciprocity. Mr. Baldwin devoted his life to one single reform, that of Responsible Government. Mr. Brown gave his life to a single reform, Representation by Population."

As to gain the end Mr. Laurier proposes to the Liberal party the consent of a neighboring nation must be first obtained, the new Liberal programme does not seem quite so practical as party programmes generally are. If Mr. Laurier had proclaimed that the Liberals of the Dominion are prepared to set up the standard of Free Trade, pure and simple, that they are ready to abolish the tariff altogether or to advocate one for revenue alone, his policy would be one which Canadians could carry out without the co-operation of a foreign state. This is what the British free traders did. They opened the ports of their country to all the world without waiting to ask what other countries whose action they could not control intended to do. This was a practical policy. It will continue to exist although the land has been, through the action of the Association, unfairly deprived of an advantage to which it had a right; and we are not at all sure that Westminster will, in the long run, be a gainer by having a benefit conferred upon it to which it has no equitable claim.

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carrying out his peculiar policy is concerned, exactly where he is now. He would not be able to take the first step towards the accomplishment of his ends. Everything would depend on the action of the Congress of the United States and the temper of the American people. If they were not willing to enter into closer commercial relations with the Dominion, Mr. Laurier's advocacy of Unrestricted Reciprocity and all his labor in obtaining a majority in Parliament favorable to his views, would have been in vain. It is not the custom of provincial politicians to propose to their countrymen that what may be unattainable even when the whole country is converted to their views.

"A policy can hardly be called Canadian which cannot be acted upon without the consent and the active co-operation of a foreign nation. If it were known that the American people were favorable to unrestricted reciprocity and were only waiting for the consent of Canada to inaugurate a free interchange of commodities between the two countries, Mr. Laurier's policy would then be practical, and it would be worth people's while who were favorable to such relations between the two countries, to enlist under his banner."

The object could not be attained in any other way. But the indications are that as soon as the Americans signify their willingness to enter into reciprocal trade relations with Canada the present Government will be ready to make an arrangement with them that will be mutually profitable. As our readers know, it has been contended for the American government any time within the last ten years to have partial or restricted reciprocity with this country. All they had to do was to take the duties of certain articles and to notify the Canadian Government that they had done so, to have those articles entered on the Dominion free list. This shows that the present Government was never opposed to reciprocity in trade with the United States. As is also well known, the Americans never availed themselves of this privilege to any great extent. But if they are now coming to their senses and signify their desire to be more neighborly in matters of trade, we have no doubt but that the government will do its best to accommodate them. What it does will not perhaps meet Mr. Laurier's views. It is not to be expected that its policy will ever obtain his unqualified approbation, but it will be pretty certain to receive the support of the majority of the people of the Dominion. Even Mr. Laurier himself is pledged to give Sir John Macdonald his support in any endeavor he may make to obtain even a measure of limited reciprocity. But as it takes two to make a bargain it is evident that nothing can be done in the way of reciprocity by either of the Canadian parties until public opinion in the United States is favorable to Reciprocity. But the influence of either Sir John Macdonald or the Hon. Mr. Laurier on the American public opinion is not very great.

It will have to be admitted that the new Liberal policy is as much American as it is Canadian, and as the public men of the Liberal party of Canada cannot, under any circumstances, do much towards influencing public sentiment on the other side of the line, the Canadian Conservatives can contemplate the efforts of Mr. Laurier and his party with quiet amusement, knowing that when the proper moment arrives they, and not the Liberals, are in the position to take advantage of the circumstances favorable to reciprocity.

THE PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION.

The success of the Provincial Exhibition this year is in every way creditable to the Board of Directors and the exhibitors. It was certainly the best exhibition ever held in British Columbia, and showed that the Province has made great progress, particularly in agriculture, during the last few years. The splendid display of farm products and fruit will do much towards making the agricultural and horticultural capabilities of the province known and appreciated. We are not at all surprised to learn that the citizens of Westminster are proud of the success of their exhibition. It was something to be proud of. But their exhilaration should not have made them unjust to the other parts of the province, or regardless of the agreement that was entered into when the exhibitions were started eight years ago. The understanding that the B. C. Agricultural Association's exhibitions should be held alternately on the Island and Mainland. This agreement had, up to this year, been faithfully kept, indeed no one ever thought of violating it. But this year the Association in defiance of the understanding, passed a resolution that its next year's exhibition should be held at Westminster. It is to be regretted that it was determined to pursue a course which may be believed to be a direct breach of faith. If the arrangement that hitherto existed was found to be inconvenient or unjust to any part of the province, it could be easily dissolved in a friendly way or superseded by some other arrangement. But the change which we have to say was unwarrantable, could hardly have been made in a way more offensive to Victoria, and the Island generally. The island's representatives were treated in a manner that was the reverse of polite or fair, and the Mainland men who ventured to say a word on behalf of fair play and good faith were not at all too civilly treated. The display was well conducted very shrewdly, and we trust that those who took a leading part in the unbecoming proceedings will have the grace to be ashamed of their conduct. Victoria will survive the indignity and injustice with which she was treated at Westminster on Friday evening. It will continue to exist although the land has been, through the action of the Association, unfairly deprived of an advantage to which it had a right; and we are not at all sure that Westminster will, in the long run, be a gainer by having a benefit conferred upon it to which it has no equitable claim.

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RECIPROCIITY.

The Montreal Gazette takes the proper view of the new Liberal programme. It shows that the question of reciprocity is not exclusively Canadian and that it is not necessarily Liberal. It suggests that when the proper time comes to deal with it effectively it will probably form a prominent feature in the policy of the Conservative Party. This is what the Gazette says on the subject, and coming from the leading Conservative newspaper of the province of Quebec it is well worthy the attention of our readers. "The only other topic touched upon by the Liberal leader was the trade question, and with it dealt very briefly. He proclaimed himself for unrestricted reciprocity, and exhorted his audience to make it the single issue between parties. He believes the United States will treat for freer trade relations with Canada, and if his conviction is well founded, it is certain that the opportunity will not be withheld by the present Conservative Government. The Conservative party has always sought an extension of trade on fair and mutually advantageous lines, and has repeatedly endeavored to conclude a reciprocity arrangement with the neighboring country, and as recently as December, 1887, proposed as a solution of the factory controversy a settlement on the broad lines of reciprocal commerce. Up to this time these efforts have proved unavailing. Whether the present administration at Washington, elected in 1888, will maintain in its integrity the protective principle in the tariff, will be better disposed to consider the question than our own government. It is certain that it is that will the attitude of the American Government, in all its branches, is known, it is utterly folly for Mr. Laurier and his party to parade unrestricted reciprocity as an essential of Canadian prosperity, or as within the grasp of the Canadian people, however much they may desire it. THE TRADE QUESTION AS PRESENTED BY MR. LAURIER CANNOT BE MADE AN ISSUE IN CANADA UNTIL CONGRESS HAS SPOKEN. We may fight for and against protection, free imports, or a tariff for revenue only as the fiscal policy of the Dominion, because the determination of the tariff is within the power of Parliament, but reciprocity is dependent on the policy of another nation, and until that nation declares its attitude to have changed, and expresses its willingness to negotiate, it is futile to play the game of POLLY, TO ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE QUESTION WITH THE DIGNITY OF AN ASSASSINATION ISSUE BETWEEN PARTIES IN CANADA."

The sentences we have taken the liberty to underline present the subject of reciprocity in its true light and show the attitude which Canadian parties must take with respect to it. Whether we get reciprocity or not does not depend solely or even principally on our action which the people of this Dominion may take.

THE QUEBEC DISASTER.

The verdict of the coroner's jury in the case of the deaths caused by the dreadful landslide in Quebec severely condemns the Federal authorities. This is a paragraph from the finding of the jury: "That the death of the said Richard Leachy and some other persons is due to the gross and culpable negligence of the Federal authorities of the Dominion in not taking the necessary precautions by not building the buttresses recommended to the same authorities by the city of Quebec engineer in his report of 1884."

It is said in defiance of the Government that the jury brought in their verdict before they had seen the report of the city engineer. That report is now produced and it shows that Mr. Ballinger recommended the Government to pursue one of two courses. The first was to build the buttresses as recommended, and the other was to purchase certain properties on Champlain street, remove the houses and widen the street. He also advised that a low retaining wall be built and the crevices filled up. He strongly recommended that the latter proposition be acted on first, and if that were not found sufficient, then to build the buttresses. The Minister, Sir Hector Langevin, submitted the proposals to the proper official, who recommended the purchase of the houses and the filling up of the crevices. This was done. The street was not widened, but the land on which the houses stood was allowed to remain vacant. This took place in 1881 and 1882, and although Mr. Ballinger has been on the spot ever since he has made no further representation to the Government. The Government has spent, at one time and another, the considerable sum of \$54,000 in carrying out Mr. Ballinger's recommendations. It may be said in such an important matter as this, in which the preservation of both life and property was concerned, the Department should not have depended upon Mr. Ballinger or any one else for information. It should have sent a competent official to examine the cliff with the utmost care and have acted upon his advice. But this does not appear to have been done. We cannot say that we have much to regret in the fact that the head of the department may be Sir Hector Langevin certainly is a most conscientious and painstaking man. But he must necessarily depend to a very great extent upon his subordinates. It is physically impossible for him to give his personal attention to everything that is done in his department. The officials which we have to say were unwarrantable, could hardly have been made in a way more offensive to Victoria, and the Island generally. The island's representatives were treated in a manner that was the reverse of polite or fair, and the Mainland men who ventured to say a word on behalf of fair play and good faith were not at all too civilly treated. The display was well conducted very shrewdly, and we trust that those who took a leading part in the unbecoming proceedings will have the grace to be ashamed of their conduct. Victoria will survive the indignity and injustice with which she was treated at Westminster on Friday evening. It will continue to exist although the land has been, through the action of the Association, unfairly deprived of an advantage to which it had a right; and we are not at all sure that Westminster will, in the long run, be a gainer by having a benefit conferred upon it to which it has no equitable claim.

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RUMORS OF WAR.

The most contradictory reports come over the cable with respect to the prospects of war in Europe. One telegram tells us that war is imminent, that Germany is making preparations for war, that the attitude of Russia is threatening, and that France and Italy are ready to fly at each other's throats. This is what the telegrams that the best understanding exists between the Emperors of Russia and Germany, that the year is about to pay his neighbor, the Young Emperor, a visit; that France is peaceful, and that Italy has no desire for war. But we see nothing about any cessation of warlike preparations. Not can force what would conflict the military establishments to the slightest extent. On the contrary word comes to us that those armaments are being strengthened in various ways, and that Europe keeps itself ready for war at a moment's notice. This is not a sensation of the present, but a permanent fact. The Conservative party has always sought an extension of trade on fair and mutually advantageous lines, and has repeatedly endeavored to conclude a reciprocity arrangement with the neighboring country, and as recently as December, 1887, proposed as a solution of the factory controversy a settlement on the broad lines of reciprocal commerce. Up to this time these efforts have proved unavailing. Whether the present administration at Washington, elected in 1888, will maintain in its integrity the protective principle in the tariff, will be better disposed to consider the question than our own government. It is certain that it is that will the attitude of the American Government, in all its branches, is known, it is utterly folly for Mr. Laurier and his party to parade unrestricted reciprocity as an essential of Canadian prosperity, or as within the grasp of the Canadian people, however much they may desire it. THE TRADE QUESTION AS PRESENTED BY MR. LAURIER CANNOT BE MADE AN ISSUE IN CANADA UNTIL CONGRESS HAS SPOKEN. We may fight for and against protection, free imports, or a tariff for revenue only as the fiscal policy of the Dominion, because the determination of the tariff is within the power of Parliament, but reciprocity is dependent on the policy of another nation, and until that nation declares its attitude to have changed, and expresses its willingness to negotiate, it is futile to play the game of POLLY, TO ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE QUESTION WITH THE DIGNITY OF AN ASSASSINATION ISSUE BETWEEN PARTIES IN CANADA."

"Every one is convinced," he says, "that at any moment so horrible a war may break out that all other wars, even that of section in America, will be like the child's play in comparison. The adversaries which we foresee obliged to take up arms, Russia and France on the one side, and Germany, Austria, Italy, and the other, will bring seven millions of men on the battlefield, with a reserve of ten millions. By means of a rapid concentration rendered possible by the railways we shall witness, even during the first few days, two collisions, one in the east, the other in the west, in which three millions of human beings will be seen struggling together, for both sides will endeavor to crush their enemy under the attack of invulnerable masses. No strategist, not even Molke himself, can foresee what will be the result of such a collision. It will be like, all we can say is that the number of killed and wounded will, in one day, surpass that of an entire war of the past. Human blood will never have soaked the earth in such streams."

This is a dreadful picture, and what makes it more impressive is that no one knows where or how soon it may be a horrible reality.

THE ALL-AMERICAN CONGRESS.

The speech with which Mr. Secretary Blaine opened the All-American Congress was very highly spoken of. It was certainly worthy of the occasion. The nature of the Congress is well described in the following felicitous sentences: "The delegates whom I am addressing can do much to establish permanent relations of confidence, respect and friendship between the nations they represent. They can show to the world that in peaceful and amicable conference, independent American powers in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality a conference in which there can be no attempt to create a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; that in the peaceful and amicable conference, independent American powers in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality a conference in which there can be no attempt to create a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; that in the peaceful and amicable conference, independent American powers in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality a conference in which there can be no attempt to create a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; that in the peaceful and amicable conference, independent American powers in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality a conference in which there can be no attempt to create a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; 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