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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

TOPICS—	PAGE
Cabinet Reconstruction.....	99
The Call for Hercules.....	99
The Latest Scandal.....	99
A Logical Disputation.....	100
The Quebec Complication.....	100
The Quebec Lotteries.....	100
The English Channel Tunnel.....	100
Hodge in English Politics.....	101
Land-Holding by Aliens in the U.S.....	101
The BeEring Sea Arbitration.....	101
"FEUILLES VOLANTES POESIES CANADIENNES....."	101
THE PILGRIMAGE TO KEVLAAR. (Poem—Translation)	102
..... Emma C. Rea.	
THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.....	102
..... Charles F. Newcombe.	
PARIS LETTER.....	103
..... Z.	
A PLEA. (Poem).....	104
..... Samuel M. Baylis.	
SONNETS TO THE LARK—II.....	104
..... Sarepta.	
GLIMPSER AND IMPRESSIONS DURING A STORM.....	105
..... F. A. H.	
THE RAMBLER.....	105
..... Emma Playter Seabury.	
A TRIOLET.....	106
THE FROST KING. (Selected).....	106
ART NOTES.....	106
MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.....	107
OUR LIBRARY TABLE.....	107
LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.....	108
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.....	109
SCIENTIFIC AND SANITARY.....	110
CHESS.....	111

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editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to
any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

A DEFINITE step in the direction of the long-promised reconstruction of the Dominion Cabinet has at length been taken. It is impossible to congratulate the Government or its friends on the result. It is we suppose unavoidable under the party system that every movement of this kind must partake more or less of the nature of compromise. By this we mean that it is impossible for the Government which exists by the support and favour of a party, and which has to fight day by day for its life against the determined hostility of another party, to act in such a matter independently and with a single eye to the best interests of the country. When new members are wanted in the Cabinet to act as the constitutional advisers of the Governor-General the thing for the leader to do under any ideal system would be simply to take a survey of the whole field and summon to a place in the national councils the ablest, the most statesmanlike, the most irreproachable men to be found in the whole country. To what extent Premier Abbott has acted on this simple principle, it is not for us to say. He alone knows. Every man is keeper of his own conscience. But every man who has been watching the course of events in Canada since his accession to office can form a pretty good estimate of the opportunities which he has had for following so patriotic a course, or rather of the obstacles which he has had to encounter, not so much from without as from within the party, and of the probabilities that any man in his position, save one of principle so lofty, and courage so extraordinary as are unhappily scarcely to be looked for in the ranks of successful politicians, would be able to pursue so exalted a course. Or, leaving the region of *a priori* speculation and coming down to the question of fact, it is quite possible and legitimate for anyone having a moderate acquaintance with the public men and affairs of the Dominion to judge for himself whether and to what extent the men chosen by Premier Abbott to succeed to the headship of the two important departments of Railways and Canals and of Public Works can be supposed to have been selected in accordance with the requirements of any ideal or lofty standard. We mean no offence to

Messrs. Haggart and Ouimet. It can only be helpful to them to have suggested to their minds at the outset of their respective careers in their new offices how lofty are the requirements of the public service in such positions of trust, and how great is the compliment which has been paid them by the Premier in choosing them above all other available men in Canada—let us be reasonable and say in the ranks of the party—for those positions. If they wish to know the views of the Premier himself in regard to the qualifications needed for public offices they have but to recall some of the sentiments expressed in his speeches in the Senate, shortly after his own accession to his present position—sentiments so lofty that, as the leader-writer on the *Regina Leader* has said, they read like sermons. Far be it from us to predict that the new Ministers will fall below the high expectations of the Canadian public. The fact cannot be disguised that the appointments have caused a good deal of surprise, possibly some disappointment. But it is sometimes an advantage rather than otherwise to one unexpectedly exalted to a difficult position that too much is not expected of him. It gives him a fine opportunity to disappoint public expectation in a most agreeable manner. Of Mr. Ouimet it can only be said that his qualifications for so responsible a position are unknown and unproved, because they have never before been put to the test. He has, therefore, an excellent opportunity to win his official spurs, so to speak. Mr. Haggart has had some experience in a much less difficult office and has acquitted himself fairly well, though he has not been called upon to take the prominent part in the House of Commons which will naturally be expected of him in his new position. His greatest misfortune is that he has not been able to shun the breath of scandal, which, even when unmerited, tends greatly to impair the usefulness of a public man, whose reputation, as well as his moral character, should, if possible, be free from the shadow of suspicion.

A NUMBER of Canadian journals of both political parties have been calling on Mr. Edward Blake to come forward at what they regard as the present crisis in the affairs of the Dominion, and put his strong shoulder to the wheel, if perchance he may be able to raise it out of the mire and replace it on the highway to prosperity. We are by no means lacking in admiration of the great, we may even say the transcendent, abilities of our distinguished fellow-countryman, and, which is of still greater importance in these evil days, of his lofty character and untarnished reputation. But just what Mr. Blake could do or be expected to do by re-entering the political arena just now is not very clear. So far as we can see there would be open to him one of three courses. He could resume his place at the head of the Liberal party; he could attach himself to the Conservative party; or he could become the founder and leader of a third party. The crucial question in either case would be that of fiscal policy. That Mr. Laurier would gladly retire in his favour, and that many of the old Liberals and not a few Conservatives would flock to his standard, should he decide on the first course, is certain. But Mr. Blake could not, after his famous manifesto, fall in with the unrestricted reciprocity to which the Liberal party as a body is now fully committed. Nor is there any reason to believe that even the attraction of his name would suffice to draw the great majority of the party from their faith in that policy as the one and only cure for our commercial ills. The direct result, then, of Mr. Blake's reappearance as the Leader of the Liberal Opposition would be a schism in the ranks of the party, which would effectually dispel all hope of success at the polls at any early day. That it would be morally impossible for Mr. Blake to work cordially with the party now in power, even if he were in full accord with its fiscal policy—which is by no means certain—is abundantly clear from the tenor of his farewell manifesto. No one can read the opinions therein expressed in reference to the character and doings of the leaders of the Conservatives of Canada and retain any doubts on this point. To enter Parliament as an independent representative, or free lance, as has been suggested, would afford a man of his ability an almost unequalled field for the display of his

forensic talents, but just how it would enable him to help the country forward to a safe and prosperous position is not very clear. The position of an independent member and critic would be a useful and honourable one, and we wish there were many such in the House. But the Independent without a majority at his back is simply powerless for the performance of any such Herculean task as that which Mr. Blake is asked to undertake. There remains, therefore, only the formation of a third party, as affording a possible field for the effective display of Mr. Blake's talents and patriotism. This method would differ from the first mentioned only in that by dropping his old party name and adopting one entirely new, the way would be made much easier for members of the Conservative or Government party to cast in their lot with him. We have no doubt whatever that Mr. Blake could quickly surround himself in this way with a choice and powerful body of followers, *provided only* that he were able to announce a new fiscal policy free from the objections which attach to both the National Policy and Unrestricted Reciprocity. But this is a formidable proviso. Where is such a policy to be found? Was it not Mr. Blake's despair of being able to suggest any such scheme which led to his retirement from public life? That despair stands out in every paragraph of the farewell letter. Were Mr. Blake an ardent free-trader, prepared to take the advice given us by some of our English mentors, there might be a chance for him still and a field worthy of his ambition, in forming and leading a Canadian free-trade party. But he has repeatedly shown that he is not a thorough-going free-trader, or at least that he regards free trade as impracticable and impossible for Canada. We are, then, regretfully forced to the conclusion that Mr. Blake's presence in Parliament at the present juncture could do little or nothing to save the country from the stern necessity which now confronts it of making choice between the two specifics which are set before it in the programmes of its two parties.

UNHAPPY Canada! Still another scandal is launched, another investigation demanded. True, in this case as in most of the others which have brought our country into so undesirable a prominence, the accusation is not a new one, but an old one revived. This time the name impeached is that of the Minister of the Interior, the accuser his fellow-representative from the North-West, Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin. This much may be said at the outset. If Mr. Dewdney is really innocent, as he is said to declare most positively, of the grave offence of having speculated in North-West lands, using the information gained in his official capacity for the personal behoof of himself and his friends, he really should consider himself under an obligation to Mr. Davin for giving him the opportunity to establish his innocence and to remove from the minds of many an impression which is and has been for years most detrimental to his reputation and influence as a public man and a member of the Government. May we not go further and say that as Mr. Davin, or to be more safely accurate, the Editor of the *Regina Leader*, has made the charge in the most unequivocal language, it will be a wonder if Mr. Dewdney can be content to lie under the accusation until the meeting of Parliament, instead of having immediate recourse to the more summary methods which the laws of every civilized country provide for the defence of slandered reputations? One thing is certain. The thing has now gone so far that it is absolutely necessary, for the sake of the country's good name as well as that of the Minister of the Interior personally, that either in Parliament or in the courts the charge be investigated. Nor, as the matter now stands, is this any the less necessary in regard to Mr. Davin himself. Having gone so far he is bound in honour to go farther and make good his charges, or stand confessed a slanderer. With regard to the accuser, another thought forces itself upon the mind. How is it to be reconciled with a sense of public duty that a public man, having knowledge of transactions which proved a member of the Government to be utterly unfit for any position of trust, much less for the office of a Cabinet Minister, should hide this knowledge in his own breast for so long a period and continue to support the Government which contained so unworthy a member? Accepting