

them in their lives by keeping them off the lines of rail to the injury of no one. The question is: Is our present course of neglect in harmony with our obligations as a Christian people?

They manage the guarding, or police, of railways better in England and on the continent of Europe. Canada is behind the age—having never yet fairly considered the important question—in the protection of the railway lines, and of the lives of the people.

Sir John A. Macdonald is a careful copyist of the Earl of Beaconsfield, or is an astonishingly good likeness of him as to his mental build. The speech read by the Governor-General, by way of opening the Session of Parliament, may be the programme of an earnest and able Cabinet, anxious to do much good and useful work for the people—or, it may be the meagrest of all meagre "Lenten fares," as Mr. Mackenzie put it. The jubilation over the increase of trade prosperity was to be expected, for men who had framed the N. P., and given boundless promises of good things to come, would certainly lay claim to a large share of all that Providence may have done irrespective of politicians. The difficulty is, that even the best friends of the new fiscal policy are not quite sure that any substantial benefit has yet accrued to the people generally from the working of it. Mr. Gault took a quaint method of showing how well it is succeeding when he spoke of a falling off in the number of houses to be let in Montreal; but many of his friends think he must have changed his route to his office or overlooked some notice papers. The truth is, that while Conservatives speak with confidence of the better times resulting from the National Policy, and figures so far quoted of imports, exports and duties are against them, and the Liberals bless Providence a little and curse Sir John a great deal, those who care for, and understand the market and manufactures of the country, are still in doubt as to whether the anti-Free Trade movement has been to our advantage or not. The trade and navigation returns given are only up to June, 1879, so they only deal with four or five months of business under the N. P. The matter can only be fairly open to debate when we have the next return. At present all controversy about it must be confined to abstract principles. Any venture beyond that is going into the land of guessing and speculation.

Our Conservative leaders seem to shrink a little from abolishing Provincial Governments and their train of costly luxuries, Lieutenant-Governors, Sergeants-at-Arms and Houses of Assembly. It is proposed, as a milder measure, to give them something to do, so that the shame of their uselessness may become less startlingly evident. A mission has been found for them. They are to make laws for the equitable "distribution of assets" in cases where these "assets" are insufficient to go round. Thus in place of one, doubtless defective, Insolvent Act, we are to be blessed with eight, and a change of nomenclature. The "prentice hand" of embryo legislators is to be tried upon this the most serious and complicated question of trade ethics. Let the Canadian mind revel for a few moments in the contemplation of Amor de Cosmos and his talented associates constructing a "distribution of assets" on the same broad principles of equity they desire to apply to the other Provinces in the construction of the Pacific Railway. Add seven more Provincial Acts, each bending to the side of debtor or creditor, as the latent instincts of a noble party-spirit devoted to the cultivation of votes may direct, and Canada will be forced to send out emigration agents specially trained to induce an immigration of lawyers. Good citizens in their way are lawyers, but it is possible to have too much of a good thing. It will not be surprising if some of these prospective enactments for the "distribution of assets" should include the debtor as well as the creditors in its appointments—perhaps by an oversight, but it may be deliberately.

It is a matter for sincere congratulation that the untoward accident to the Princess and Governor-General ended in nothing worse than a few scratches and bruises. But for the presence of mind and pluck of the Hon. Mr. Bagot and his groom, in all probability it would have been a very serious matter. Fortunately it was nobody's fault, and since men began to drive horses accidents have happened; but it would be just as well that the ordinary precautions should be taken by those whose lives are in the care of us all not to drive horses too easily frightened.

The Press is mad, madder, maddest over the Governor-General's "order," as it is called, to the telegraph operators at Ottawa not to send over the wires any reports as to the accident until he himself had made the first communication. Reporters have risen up in anger and condemned the arbitrary and despotic proceedings; they have talked about the Press in Russia and in India, and have passed an indignant resolution against this latest phase of tyranny and in avowal of the rights of a "free Press." But there is really no occasion for such an outbreak of temper. The "order" could have been nothing more than a request, for the telegraph companies are in no way under the control of the Governor-General; but it was quite competent for him to issue a request to the telegraph operators, which as a matter of courtesy they were bound to respect. Why on earth should Major De Winton have gone about hunting up reporters to ask them to restrain themselves? Does anyone in his senses think it was not better that the Marquis should send his own report to the Queen than that she should hear of it first from sensational reporters? The liberty of the Press is quite safe in Canada, and the "order" of the Governor-General may convey a hint to the gentlemen who report for newspapers that people have been for some time afraid of, and are now beginning to protest against, irresponsible sensationalism.

I congratulate Mayor Rivard on the pluck he has shown in refusing at last to tender an official reception to Mr. Parnell on the occasion of his visit to Montreal. That gentleman has made it evident that he is first of all, and most of all, a political agitator, and is rather a hindrance than a help to the cause of philanthropy. Let the Irish—the good, the bad and the indifferent among them—meet him, and give him welcome, by all means. They have a right to do it, and perhaps he has some reason to expect it at their hands, but a public and official reception by our Mayor and Aldermen, as representing the city, would have been a gross outrage upon the sentiments of the respectable portion of the community, and Mayor Rivard has done well to reconsider his determination, and finally refuse to read an address to this man who is a vilifier of honest men—has been a slanderer of women—is an ambitious agitator by the nature of him, and a quasi-philanthropist from stress of circumstance.

There is every reason to believe that the worst of the distress in Ireland is over. The reports at hand go to show that the whole aspect of the country is improved, and that better times have come. It is seen now how utterly groundless was Mr. Parnell's charge against those who had undertaken to work with the Duchess of Marlborough in distributing the funds placed at their disposal. The measures adopted have proved adequate to the full stress of the emergency. And what is quite as praiseworthy, the committee have taken steps to guard against a similar occurrence of famine next year by purchasing £10,000 worth of potatoes, which will be distributed among those who have no seed potatoes.

The late by-elections in England have in no way helped to decide the moot question in all English political circles just now—the relative strength of the parties. The election of Mr. Waddy for Sheffield was unquestionably a triumph for the Liberals, for Mr. Roebuck had been for many years the pet of the Sheffield Tories. The Liverpool contest ended as everybody expected it would—in the return of the Conservative candidate. Lord Ramsay was a strong man and commanded a powerful backing, but he was appealing to a thoroughly Conservative constituency and had little or no chance of beating his opponent. The election for Southwark made prominent once more the chief cause of weakness in the Liberal camp—disunion. There were two Liberal candidates; there should have been but one. The Conservatives work hard and pull together—they rarely divide in order to court defeat; but with the Liberals it is not so. They have a great variety of interests, they are pledged to progress, and concerning every fresh step contemplated there is a clash of opinions and often of interests. Mr. Gladstone may charm with his rhetoric and convince with his arguments, but those things will not carry the elections unless the party leaders set to work and organize their followers.

EDITOR.