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NOTICE.

The Burland-Desbarats Lithographic Company have removed to the magnificent six story building erected for them by G. B. Burland, Esq., at Nos. 3, 5, 7, 9 Bleury, near the corner of Craig, where they will carry on all their different branches of business and publish the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, L'OPINION PUBLIQUE and the MECHANICS' MAGAZINE.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS

Montreal Saturday, 15th April, 1876.

THE SESSION.

The week, since our last remarks, has been one of lagging and long hours for the members, the House of Commons sitting till two and three o'clock in the morning and sometimes later, and sitting, also, on Saturday, many members having besides committees to attend in the morning. Being a member of Parliament, in these circumstances, is not a pleasure; but very severe slavery. Mr. MACKENZIE, the Premier, even with his rugged constitution, has succumbed to it, having been obliged to leave the House sick. Dr. TUPPER, the "Rupert of debate," has gone to Halifax, to attend what was feared to be the deathbed of his father.

There was a very discreditible scene on Saturday afternoon between Mr. MACKENZIE and Dr. TUPPER. Mr. MACKENZIE told Dr. TUPPER across the house, while making a speech against the Ministry, that he did not know what he was talking about. For this and some other remarks of equal politeness, he was told by Sir JOHN MACDONALD that he had forgotten his position as the leader of the House. The scene altogether was most regrettable, but it must be said that the explosion appears to have cleared the atmosphere, and there has been altogether better temper since.

Of course, with such constant application, a great many measures have been advanced a stage; but the estimates have made slow progress, and the items for Immigration, involving the discussion of the late Agent Generalship and the London office, were kept back till the closing scenes. The Ministry got the items passed; but they had difficulty.

The Life Insurance Bill, which had excited a great deal of attention and feeling, has finally been withdrawn by the Government, upon the pressure, it is understood, of American companies; but Mr. CARRWRIGHT stated that the Bill would be re-introduced next session, adding the delay afforded would give the British companies sufficient time to be heard from respecting its provisions. The object of the Bill was to ensure greater security for persons insuring by increasing the amount of deposits in Canada.

The Protection question came up incidentally again on a motion of Mr. COLBY to reduce the present duty on coal oil to one half the present amount. He made out an admittedly strong case; but his motion was rejected on a vote of 120 to 60. Possibly in another temper of the House, his proposal might have been accepted, as it has for object to break up a ring of oil manufacturers.

The great event of the week has been the explanations of the Premier respecting the Pacific Railway. He distinctly admitted the public faith was pledged to proceed with that work as rapidly as the country could afford; and described the position so far established by the several surveys and the difficulties within the

Province of British Columbia. The surveys are not yet in a sufficiently advanced state to enable the line to be located in that Province. It is almost impossible to find a line from the Tête Jaune pass through any of the lower portions of the Province, and the surveys of the more northern routes are not yet completed.

In the Senate, there was a vote of censure passed by a small majority against the Government for not proceeding more rapidly with the Pacific Railway than they proposed. The composition of the Senate is not very favourable for the Ministers; and this vote seems to be an injustice, if the public professions of the Ministers are accepted, and certainly by these they ought to be judged.

The steel rails question was also brought up in the House, and of course led to some bitterness of debate. But nothing new was elicited. Mr. MACKENZIE declared the purity of his intentions and this declaration was accepted by his followers. He also stated that he acted under the advice of his Engineer in Chief, when no person will accuse of jobbery. There yet remains the fact that the bargain has been highly improvident to the Dominion to the tune of some half a million of money, and it was further open to the grave constitutional objection of being unnecessarily undertaken without the previous consent of Parliament. This was the really weak spot for the present Ministry, in view of their former ones.

Another important railway explanation was that of the Premier on the cancelling of the contract for the Georgian Bay railway. It appears from the documents that the contract was let before any adequate surveys were completed, and that the proposed location of the line was altogether a mistake and an impossibility. Mr. A. B. FOSTER claims some \$40,000 for money expended in his operations, and Mr. MACKENZIE, by order in council, has admitted that he might safely be paid \$20,000 on account, the remainder being left open for investigation. An inference from these circumstances is that it would have been better not to have given Mr. FOSTER the contract with so much haste. Perhaps also Mr. LEGG will find some satisfaction in its now being admitted that the more northerly portions of the country are better adapted for a railway—at any rate more perfect surveys will give us the facts.

The Committees were not so active during this week as the last. That on the Depression has continued to take evidence, but has elicited nothing of fresh interest. That on Agriculture has further elicited that there is a strong desire on the part of the agricultural community for a certain measure of protection. That on Immigration has taken further evidence to establish that our North West Territory contains altogether more vast resources than the public generally believe.

OUR INDIANS.

The Reports of the Indian Superintendent and agents for 1875 have been laid before Parliament since our former papers were published. The Superintendent states that there is little to record in that year respecting the Indians of Quebec, except the prevalence of a malignant type of fever to which many of the Montagnais of Lake St. John fell victims, and the expense drew heavily on the Indian fund of the Province. Among the St. Regis Indians, there was an increase of 18 in the year, and an increase in value of personal property of about \$3,000. The majority were sober and industrious, and some of them very good farmers. Complaints are made of the sale of liquors to the Indians both at Caughnawaga and Lake of Two Mountains. A school was established at Temiscaming during 1875 and the attendance at school generally improved. No allusion is made by either the local agent or the Superintendent or the Minister, to whose department they belong, to the Oka troubles; nor the desire of the St. Regis to emigrate.

In New Brunswick there are two Indian Superintendencies. In the northern there

are about 900 Indians. The Reserves are mostly wilderness lands, with small patches cultivated on the banks of rivers on which oats and potatoes are raised. Their dwellings are built principally of deals got from the mills in the neighbourhood. Personal property is of little value, and with little exception, they own no live stock. They are civilized and quiet, but suffer from the use of liquors furnished by unprincipled dealers, whom, so far, it has been impossible to convict. They are all under the supervision of the Roman Catholic Church and could have plenty of employment and improve their condition if they were willing to work.

The agent in his report for 1875 notices upon the whole a slight improvement and is confident the stringent regulations respecting liquor traffic are producing a good effect. In the Southern Superintendency of New Brunswick there are several small bands of Indians numbering in all 502, a small decrease; but a considerable number of children and aged people died during 1875. There are six Reserves, but on some of them no Indians live preferring to settle down on any unoccupied land. The Reserves amount in all to 19,712 acres. On the largest of these, on the Tobique and St. John rivers, a number of lots have been sold, and a number of others occupied by white settlers, but there still remains a large quantity of excellent land, sufficient for many more Indians than reside on it. The soil is cultivated to a small extent on all of the Reserves, but the Indians are generally very poor. Hunting and fishing are pursued to a limited extent, and they work as laborers near the Reserves. Their morals will compare favourably with their more civilized brethren. Roman Catholic Missionaries visit them occasionally and nearly all belong to that Church.

They have nearly finished two chapels, and mission houses, on the Tobique and Kingslear Reserves, but are indifferent about schools, and none have been established. They own little personal property, and make slow progress in civilization, few of them being inclined to regular work. Timber has been extensively pillaged on the Tobique Reserve, and in 1874 a large quantity was seized and confiscated by the Indian Agent.

In Nova Scotia there are 8 Indian Districts, but from some of these no reports have been received. The Indians in the Bear River District, numbering 363, cultivate 100 out of their 3000 acres and have 400 in pasture. They have 50 dwellings, some cattle, and personal property to the value of \$10,000, and they sell annually fish and furs to a considerable value. Their morality is fair, and there is a gradual improvement in civilization and wealth. There is a school among them, but the attendance is small. The 200 Indians in the Kentville District have a large reserve, but little of it fit for agriculture. They manifest a desire to lead more civilized lives to have houses and farms of their own, and more comfortable than are attainable in a wigwam. The Pictou Indians number 210, and have a reserve of 130 acres, besides two fertile islands in Merigonish acres. They have a church and a few houses but no school. Their improvement is slow, and they show a great aversion to farming, only 10 acres of their reserve being cultivated. The women are stated by the agent to be specially industrious. The Antigonish Indians number 158 having a reserve of 700 acres, of which they cultivate 200. They are sober and industrious, are preparing to build houses, have some personal property, and depend mostly on fishing and coopering for support. In Richmond Co. there are 220 Indians, on a reserve of 1281 acres of which 200 are partially cultivated. The crops are oats, potatoes and barley, but they do not raise enough for their own needs. They are sober and industrious, but very poor. Neither in this nor in the Antigonish District are there any schools. The Miacaac about Port Hood number 216. They have a reserve of 3,200 acres worth \$4 an acre. Some of

them have houses, horses, cattle &c., raise good crops and are prosperous; but the majority are poor. They are excellent labourers; their morality is good; and they make a living by hunting, fishing, and coopering. They have a school with a regular attendance of 30 children. There are 254 Indians on Cape Breton, as a rule sober, quiet, industrious, and religious. They have a reserve 3 miles long, but with few houses or barns or improvements, though they raise sufficient potatoes and oats for their use. There is a school with an average attendance of 29 children.

On Prince Edward Island, there are 305 Indians, mostly on Lennox Island, in Richmond Bay. There is also a reserve of 189 acres on the mainland. Lennox Island contains 1320 acres and is held in trust by the "Aborigines Protection Society of London." About 350 acres of this are barmen, bog, and peat.

The personal property of these Indians consisting of fishing boats &c., is valued at \$646. They have 10 frame buildings and about 560 other dwelling places. About 60 acres of land are cultivated, and 927 in wood. Their agricultural implements consist of ploughs, harrows and carts, and they have a few cattle. Their morality is fair. There are 99 children of whom 40 attend the Government school. The Superintendent speaks hopefully of their probable improvement and progress.

WINTER NAVIGATION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

This is a subject which we may be said almost to have made our own, on account of the frequency with which we have treated it, and the varied information, literary and pictorial, which we have brought to bear on it. When a special committee was cast during the present session we urged a thorough study and expeditious treatment of the question, and we have of late several times alluded to the progress of the committee's labors. We are enabled to-day to lay before our readers an abstract of the report. We regard the matter of so much importance that we shall recapitulate the principal points of this report. The committee consider that the following data appear to be established.

- I. The floe ice of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence is composed chiefly of ice the weight or resistance of which does not justify looking upon it as a serious obstacle to winter navigation.
- II. The floe ice never covers the river from shore to shore.
- III. The floe ice lies for the greater part of the season on the south shore, from the fact of the prevailing winds coming more or less from the north.
- IV. From the position of the floes steamers navigating up and down the St. Lawrence would seldom or never come in contact with the ice to such an extent as would seriously impede their progress.
- V. Throughout the ice regions the surface of the water is perfectly smooth, a great advantage to a screw steamer.
- VI. Fogs of very rare occurrence during the winter months, and the whole season is sometimes entirely free from them.
- VII. Snow storms are not so numerous as to justify our attaching any great importance to them, and a vessel in such a position as a vessel enveloped in a fog, the former having the floe ice under her keel, acting as a shield between her and the shore, while the latter has not such protection. The committee therefore consider the practicability and safety of the winter navigation of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence established; they consider that the commercial results would be in proportion to the amount of confidence derived by experience from the successful issue of the proposed experiment, which they recommend should be tried as soon as circumstances will admit.

A POINT OF THE POSTAL LAW.

We beg to draw the attention of the Post Office Department to the effect of a regulation which appears to us, in its application, to conflict with the spirit and letter of the Postal law. The law says