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## CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, June 12th, 1875.

### THE POSTAGE

On the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, will henceforth be prepaid by the Publishers. Subscribers need not therefore pay any postage, commuted or otherwise, at their respective Post Offices.

### A FURTHER INDUCEMENT.

Some subscribers have attended to our request, and paid their accounts; some make it a rule to save us the trouble and expense of collecting, and pay in advance; others seem indifferent and do not respond with alacrity to our call. The occasion now offers to make a special distinction between these two classes, and we propose favoring the first as follows. Hitherto all subscribers have paid postage on the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, to the amount of 20 cents per annum, if commuted. We have now arranged to *prepay the postage* on every paper we mail from this office, but we do not intend that those who neglect to pay their subscriptions shall profit by this new arrangement. Nothing will be charged for postage to subscribers paying in advance, but those who allow themselves, from any cause whatever, to fall in arrears in our books, will be charged postage at the rate of 20 cents per annum, and this amount will be collected from them with their subscription. This rule goes into operation *at once*, therefore we again request all subscribers owing arrears or current term to settle at once, for their own sake, as well as to save us expense and annoyance. Let them not forget that our Chromo, so highly praised by the Canadian Press in every section of the country, will not be given to any subscriber still in arrears on 1st July next. So once more, pay, and look pleasant.

### TINKERING THE CONSTITUTION.

The utterances of Mr. BLAKE, as an individual, are worth what that gentleman himself is worth, and no more. The utterances of Mr. BLAKE, as a Cabinet officer, bear a far higher import, as they entail Ministerial solidarity. When he entered the Government a few days ago, it was confidently asserted that he would forego his own ideas and quietly fall into the routine of his colleagues. His speech at Walkerton, on his reelection, has belied that statement. He there repeated the views proclaimed many months before at Aurora, thus proving that he has not lost the courage of his opinions. It is true that he took pains to impress upon his audience that these theories were his own, and that the Government was not expected to share the responsibility of them, but the force of that statement was considerably weakened when he quoted a speech of Mr. MACKENZIE that the PREMIER seconded his views on the important constitutional question of an elective Senate. Be this point, however, as it may, one of two things must happen, now that Mr. BLAKE has accepted the portfolio of Justice. He will either drop his theories at the thres-

hold of the Council Room, or he will import them there and enforce them. If the former, then we have nothing more to say, and, during his tenure of office, Mr. BLAKE will no longer be thought of as a constitutional reformer and instructor of the people. If the latter, the case becomes serious, and we may sound aloud the old warning: *festina lente*. A Parliamentary free lance may be doing a world of good by broaching new ideas to the people, but a responsible Minister is sworn to the maintenance of a trust in the written Constitution of the country and he must prefer the routine of duty to the novelty of radical reform.

We should distinguish between legislative and constitutional questions among those advocated by Mr. BLAKE. Compulsory Voting, the Representation of Minorities and Cumulative Suffrage are measures of legislative detail which a Government may well take up in the interest of the public. But the subject of a change in the Senate is a clearly constitutional one and we hold that the plain duty of the Government is, pending the unmistakable will of the people, to maintain the *status quo*. We think Mr. MACKENZIE committed an error in voting for the MILLS motion last session, because that motion aimed at a radical change in the British North America Act, and his Government, like every Government that has preceded it, or will succeed it, is bound to keep that Act free from the passing tricks of Parliamentary gymnastics. Another feature of the MILLS motion is that it is the first direct attempt at tinkering the Constitution. The abolition of Dual Representation, and the establishment of the Supreme Court were not precisely constitutional questions, because the British North America Act made no mention of the one, and distinctly allowed legislation on the other. But it is not so with the Senate whose mode of existence is fully laid down in the Act.

It is a fundamental principle of successful administration that the letter of a Constitution should be as little and as seldom altered, as possible. Our American neighbors, impetuous and variable, as we are fond of representing them to be, have, in a century's time, attached only fifteen amendments to their Constitution, most of them of slight importance, and the chief of them necessitated only by the exigencies of the Civil War. And yet the Constitution of the United States is a far less complete and perspicuous document than the British North America Act. The Americans, besides, rigidly insist upon their capital two-thirds rule, which should be the model, in such cases, of legislative decision among ourselves. On this particular question of the Senate, we can afford to speak more freely, as we are theoretically in favor of an elective Upper House, but we believe the higher principle of not meddling with the Constitution, until it has had the mature test of years, a far more important matter than the change advocated by Messrs. MILLS and BLAKE. We need not insist upon the further view that the elective system, like the abolition of judicial appeal to the Privy Council, is the severance of another link which attaches Canada to the Crown. From this stand point, we are sure that a considerable fraction of the Liberal party itself, represented by the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Herald*, will decline making undue inroads into the Constitution. Altogether, we think the Government, even with Mr. BLAKE in it, had better accept the "rest and be thankful policy," with which some of its adversaries pleasantly twit it, and apply itself to questions of administration, instead of attempting measures of constitutional change.

### INDIANS OF THE DOMINION.

We have received a copy of the first report of the new Department of the Interior, which deals with the important subjects of Indians and the Dominion Lands. The Dominion Lands' portion of the report, being printed separately, we have already noticed. The portion relating to the Indians contains matter of much interest. It is fortunate for us that we

have no Indian questions of an exciting nature as our neighbours have; and this may be ascribed to the good faith with which the Indians on British Territory have ever been treated. It is doubtless no more than the simple duty of an individual or a nation to observe good faith, but still when we look at the disgraceful perfidy with which the Indians have been treated from the earliest times in America, it is a subject of legitimate boast to be able to say that, on British Territory, good faith has produced the fruits of peace and good will.

We learn from this report that, within a few months past, four treaties have been made with the Indian population of the North West—the first with the Chippewas and Crees, numbering 3,374; the second with the Chippewas, 881; the third with the same, 3,050; and the fourth with the Crees and Sautaux, 3,000; in all 10,305. These treaties give an enormous extent of territory for peaceful civilization, stretching from the 90th meridian of west longitude very nearly to the 111th; and reaching from the boundary line (49th parallel) to the 53rd. Much of this immense tract is of the highest fertility, and destined in the immediate future to become the home of an immense population. The details of these several treaties are printed in the report, to which we refer those readers who desire to make particular study of them. Our space will not permit us to give them. Enough to say that they were negotiated with great patience and appear satisfactory to all concerned, although it is true that the Indian demands, in many cases, were much larger than were anticipated.

The Hon. Mr. LAIRD, the Minister of this Department, who was personally present at the negotiation of one of the treaties, reports the incident that, during his visit to the North West, he met with several chiefs and head men of that portion of the Sioux tribe, who fled to British Territory after the Indian massacre in 1862. Every one will remember how bloody and dreadful that was to the settlers of the state of Minnesota. It is now established that it was an act of revenge for breach of faith with that tribe of Indians. Mr. LAIRD states: "I was pleased to observe numbers of them working in the harvest fields of the settlers near Portage LaPrairie, and, on inquiry, found, that generally speaking, they conducted themselves as peaceable and honest people. Lieut.-Gov. Morris and myself strongly urged them to remove to the reserve which the Government had assigned for them near the confluence of the little Saskatchewan river with the Assiniboine. They were evidently fully sensible of their position as exiles, and seemed to feel that, having no territorial rights in the country, they had been kindly dealt with in being assigned a reserve. They however begged for a little assistance in seed grain and agricultural implements, and they were promised, provided they settled on their reserve without delay, that they would receive some aid of this kind." We have quoted this official statement because it seems to us to be an historic fact of strange and gratifying interest as compared with the previous bloody antecedents of these men. It furnishes also a striking illustration of the further fact that kindness and good faith are a better policy and cheaper than perfidy.

The report deals with the position of the Indians in British Columbia. This does not appear to be free from difficulties arising from the mixing up of Dominion and Provincial questions, incident to the entry of that Province into the Confederation. The Dominion Government have acted on the principle of dealing liberally with the British Columbian Indians, and have in two years expended no less than \$54,000 for their benefit. The Minister remarks that this liberality of the Dominion Parliament stands in marked contrast to the policy hitherto pursued towards the Indians by the Local Government, whose annual expenditure on their behalf did not exceed a few hundred dollars.

Early last year, the sum of \$6,000 was appropriated by the Dominion Government for the purpose of making a survey of the Indian Reserve of British Columbia. It was better to spend this amount of money than to have disputes between the Indians and white settlers, with regard to their respective land claims. Nothing is more important than a good understanding, and, on the whole, the administration of Canadian Indian affairs, by the Dominion Government, is satisfactory.

### THE CZAR AND M. THIERS.

It is really too bad that the peace of Europe should be at the mercy of one or two men. A fortnight ago, BISMARCK was on the point of precipitating a war with France, which, considering the circumstances of the attack, would inevitably have involved a greater portion of the continent. He was arrested in his headlong course solely, as we are assured, by the interference of the Russian EMPEROR. For so much ALEXANDER II deserves the thanks of the civilized world, but it is none the less lamentable that even so wise and humane a prince as he should have the destinies of Europe dependent upon his word. The reflection is a bitter one that, notwithstanding the boasted progress of ideas in our century, autocracy should be so palpably in the ascendant, and it is only a small measure of relief that France, profiting by her terrible experience, has decreed in her new Constitution, that the President of the Republic cannot declare war without the consent of the Chambers.

The danger that threatened, a few weeks ago, may arise again at any moment. The CZAR himself seems to be of this opinion, and, in preparing for it, evidently wishes to fortify himself by a thorough knowledge of the situation. For this purpose, he has intimated the wish of a personal interview with M. THIERS, in order to obtain the views of that remarkable man on the condition of Europe. The compliment is a high one to the veteran statesman, but it is thoroughly deserved, because no man is more conversant with the whole range of diplomacy and none better entitled to deliver a statement based on experience, judgment and patriotism. It may happen that circumstances will prevent M. THIERS meeting the EMPEROR, at Brussels, during the summer, but pending the possibility of such personal meeting, the ex-PRESIDENT has already placed himself in communication with his old friend, Prince GORTSCHAKOFF, through the medium of his ambassador at Paris, Count ORLOFF.

M. THIERS will doubtless improve the opportunity to acquaint the Russian Court with the real significance of the Republican movement in France, the true nature of the Constitution of the 25th February, and the honest desire of rehabilitation, quite distinct from any motive of aggression or vengeance, which the immense majority of the French people entertain. He will explain that the organization of the army is not a menace, but a precaution in view of unforeseen but inevitable contingencies, and that the measure is necessary to restore France to her rightful position in Europe. He will prove the sincerity of this view by pledging partial or total disarmament, if Germany and Russia will do likewise. All the phases of the religious question will doubtless come up for consideration. Here the opinions of M. THIERS will be particularly valuable. He is not an Ultramontanist, nor even a Catholic, but a free thinker, and his whole career proves that he cannot be in sympathy with that party in France which would provoke hostility against Germany on account of the latter's contest with the Catholic Bishops and Clergy. He will have no difficulty in showing to the CZAR that the French government, on more than one occasion of extreme delicacy, has done its best, and successfully, to avoid giving offence in this respect, while the present large majority of the Left in the Committee of Thirty, and the certain triumph of the Republicans in the impending general elections, are so many strong guarantees