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A Needed Conflagration.

The Halifax militia are, we think, to be congratulated on the occurrence of the fire in their drill hall on 3rd instant. Every obsolete rifle and antiquated set of accoutrements destroyed is a distinct gain to the force, and it hastens the time when the Department, in common decency, will be obliged to issue an arm and an equipment of a modern and serviceable pattern. It is disgraceful that in a flourishing country of five millions the militia—on whom would fall the brunt of any foreign attack, or who would, as in 1885, have to repress insurrection in distant parts of the Dominion—should be provided with an obsolete weapon, and an equipment as much inferior to that in use by other civilized nations as the smooth-bore, flint-lock musket is inferior to the Martini-Henri. No nation that has a militia force and professes to encourage it has any right to so heavily handicap it; the inferiority would be—at the very time the services of the force were wanted—a direct invitation to national disaster, and to cruel slaughter in the ranks of our defenders. *In pace paratus* is recognized as a truism by every country except Canada.

The Dismissal of the Quebec Ministry.

At this day no man could with reason recommend a return to the old autocratic system in vogue even in British countries when our grandfathers were boys; and yet, the contrary plan of submitting everything to the people, and lowering every standard not in accordance with the popular majority has attained such a pitch as to make lovers of good government welcome the determined and resolute action of one man who, working solely for what he considers to be the best interests of the country, acts in direct opposition to the voiced wish of the majority of the electorate. Such praiseworthy action was that of the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, when, on Thursday last, he summarily dismissed from office the MERCIER Ministry. When liberty becomes license

—when the people return, not once, but repeatedly, a clique of representatives who work for their own pockets, and not for the interests of their constituents, and who bring disgrace and contempt on the province whose honour and dignity they are bound to jealously maintain—the time has come for the action of that branch of British government, the representative of the Crown, in the assertion of his rights and the ignominious punishment of the men who have betrayed their trust. So may it long continue in Canada. If the people, as a mass, show themselves unfit to rule, the constitutional checks to their *dictum* must be put in force and their use endorsed by those who value honest rule. Should the electors of the Province of Quebec again return the late Ministry, it will reveal such a lack of intelligence and of any sense of right and wrong as to make any admirer of good government regret that the voting power of the masses is not greatly limited. No honest voter who examines from a non-partisan point of view, the record of the late Ministry—the number of questionable transactions in which they have figured—the enormous expense into which they have plunged the province—but must honestly think that a change is absolutely necessary. The action of the Lieutenant-Governor in such a crisis ought to have the endorsement of every elector who values integrity. It is not a question of politics; it is one of the punishment of wholesale speculation.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Action.

It is difficult—so far it has been impossible—for defenders of the late administration to frame any sensible criticism of the Lieutenant-Governor's action. Strip their diatribes of abuse, violent invective, and not very ingenious quibbling, and nothing remains, but the plea that as the Ministers had been returned by a large majority of the popular vote, they should still hold office. Any school-boy knows, or should know, that the Cabinet, by the constitution, hold office as the advisers of the representative of the Crown; when he loses confidence in them, by discreditable acts on their part, out they must go. Their action in the Baie des Chaleurs case was submitted to three distinguished judges, possibly the only class in the country who may be expected to act with perfect impartiality. Every species of evidence that could possibly bear on the case was presented to them. One of the three has been so ill since the case closed that in spite of unusual delay he has been unable to voice his decision; while his two colleagues have reported—as was only to have been expected from the evidence—certain members of the Cabinet, including the "Honourable" Mr. Mercier to be directly implicated in gross irregularities. What other course was open to the Lieutenant Governor than prompt dismissal of the whole clique we cannot imagine. He has been blamed by some for too great haste in the ejection of the offenders; but it must be remembered that in face of the judges' decision, he would have been showing tacit approval of their guilt by permitting them to continue for even a single day as his advisers.

Practical University Extension.

The practical outcome of the University Extension movement has now reached this side of the Atlantic, its success in England having been re-

markable. What is called a "university settlement"—with the object of making a centre for the dissemination of college instruction among working people—has been successfully inaugurated in New York; while in Boston, a number of Harvard men some time ago organized a society for a like purpose. It is known as the Prospect Progressive Union; it has grown rapidly and is doing excellent work. Its members exceed two hundred in number, over forty of them being systematically employed in giving instruction. The society has rented and furnished a suite of rooms as headquarters, and is giving the public a large variety in lines of study; lectures and entertainments of various kinds are offered, and special care is exercised that the teaching band meet their audiences and guests on terms of perfect social equality. For every evening in the week a regular programme is mapped out and carefully followed; while, for the occasional recreation of the students, there is a room supplied with games, and a smoking room. Similar institutions might well be started in the larger Canadian cities; it is altogether likely that they would receive a large patronage. Which city will have the honour of taking the first step in such excellent work?

A New Canadian Magazine.

It has been decided by the publishers of this journal to change it into a monthly magazine of sixty-four pages, to appear under the name of THE DOMINION ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY. The first number will appear in January, and we ask the assistance of our subscribers and friends to make the new venture a success. No pains will be spared to make the magazine bright and attractive from a literary and artistic standpoint, and representative of the best class of Canadian literary work. The price has been made as moderate as possible, viz., \$1.50 yearly, or fifteen cents for single copies. Those of our subscribers who have paid in advance for the DOMINION ILLUSTRATED will receive proportionate credit for the MONTHLY on basis of \$1.50 per annum; or, if preferred, the money will be refunded.

Literary and Personal Notes.

The *Observer*, a recent addition to Toronto journalism, is a bright and readable weekly. We wish it every success.

The *Canadian Militia Gazette* is enlarging its scope, and will now devote a certain amount of attention to sporting matters, as well as to military events. There is ample room for such a departure; in fact a good bright weekly, devoted wholly to amateur sport ought to be a success in Canada. Such ventures in the past have devoted too much space to horse-racing, pigeon-shooting, prize-fighting and baseball—subjects about which little wide-spread interest can be aroused in Canada.

The library of the late Mr. Bancroft, the historian, is to be sold. It will first be offered in one lot, as the executors wisely think that, if possible, such a splendid collection should not be dispersed. An idea of its size may be gathered from the fact that it is about three times as large as the Menzies library, the catalogue of which many of our readers will remember as quite a bulky volume. Here is a splendid chance for some wealthy Canadian to help to fill the new Redpath Library building now being prepared for McGill University. It is said that the new structure will have room for 200,000 volumes; as McGill has at present not more than 40,000, the gap will be painfully apparent unless some benefactor comes to the front.