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**Height of Thunder Clouds.** "A great cumulous thunder cloud, towering up on the horizon like a huge flamboyant iceberg," says the Philadelphia *Inquirer*: "is often higher than the highest Alps would be if they were piled on top of the Himalayas. It is not unusual for these clouds to measure five, six, and even eight miles from their flat dark base, hovering a mile or two above the world, to their rounded glistening summit, splendid in the sunshine. And in those eight miles the changes of temperature are as great as those over many thousand miles of the earth's surface. Those clouds contain strata of temperature, narrow belts of freezing cold alternating with large distances of rainy mist and frozen snow and ice particles. Hailstones which are formed from a snow particle which falls from the upper strata and is frozen hard in the freezing belt and coated with added ice in the wet belt, are often found with a series of layers in their formation, showing that they have passed through this succession of cloud strata more than once on their way from the upper air to the earth."

## Earl Grey Governor-General.

It is announced from London that the King has approved the appointment of Earl Grey as the Governor-General of Canada in succession to the Earl of Minto. The family of Grey is one of the oldest in Northumberland, and the present Earl traces his lineage back to Sir John Grey, a Knight of Berwick, in the fourteenth century. The first Earl was a distinguished commanding officer in the first American war. The estate of the Earl covers 17,000 acres. His seat is in Howick House, Lesbury, Northumberland, the Earl's eldest son bearing the title of Viscount Howick. Albert Henry George Grey, the present Earl, who was born in 1851, is the son of General Hon. Charles Grey, his mother was a daughter of Sir Thomas Harvie Farquhar. The Countess of Antrim and the Countess of Minto are his sisters. He inherited his title in 1894 at the death of his grand uncle, the third Earl. Educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was elected member of Parliament in the Liberal interest for South Northumberland in 1886 and represented that constituency for five years. In 1896 Lord Grey was appointed by the British Government to succeed Dr. Jamieson as Administrator of the Chartered South African Company's territory. He was one of the original applicants for the charter and had been an influential director of the company. He had made a number of expeditions in South Africa and was considered one of the best-informed men of that country. The new Governor-General was an intimate friend of the late Cecil Rhodes and is one of the executors of his will. He was a special favorite with the late Queen Victoria, his father, Gen. Grey, being for many years private secretary to her Majesty and chief of the suite which accompanied the Prince of Wales when he made his famous visit to Canada. Earl Grey is a godson of the late Prince Consort, and Queen Victoria herself stood sponsor to his eldest daughter. Lord Grey has in recent years taken a great interest in the English public house trust, whose aims are to provide desirable places of amusement for the masses. About eighteen months ago he came to Canada to explain the objects of the trust and lectured in Toronto. As the result of his visit Cafes, Limited, an association for the establishment of people's coffee houses, was established in Toronto. The comments of leading London papers on the appointment appear in general to be highly favorable. The *Times* says: "Earl Grey combines the essential qualities of success in his earnest belief in the empire and his eminently conciliatory temper. He will hold the balance even between the parties, and we doubt not will be able to maintain with firmness the position as representative of the Crown which we are bound to maintain. He will be liked by the French-Canadians and English, and will maintain cordial relations with the United States, while at the same time he will know how to treat those petulant demonstrations of a separatist spirit which now and then from a few obscure quarters claim a certain notice. His African experience will lead him to look with sympathy on the expansion of the North-West. He has the gift of imagination. Religious large as states are ready for the plough, and no problem will more appeal to Earl Grey's mind than development of Canada as a field for British immigrants."

While we believe statistics show that a smaller percentage of passengers and employees are killed or maimed on the railways of Canada than on those of the United States, accidents are sufficiently frequent and casualties are sufficiently serious to interfere materially with the peace of mind of those who travel by rail if they are given to dwelling upon the perils and contingencies of the way. The truth of the above statement has been emphasized by two very serious accidents which have occurred during the past few weeks on the two main railways of Canada. One of these occurred on August 31st, on the Grand Trunk in the neighborhood of Richmond, Que., where as the result of the collision of two passenger trains, nine persons were killed and nearly thirty, more or less seriously wounded. The other occurred at Suitluta, a small station on the western division of the Canada Pacific, in which five persons lost their lives and a considerable number were injured. It would seem from what has been reported in connection with these wrecks that they were both due to inexcusable negligence or disobedience to orders. The *Montreal Witness* is no doubt right in thinking that these disasters furnish work for the Railway Commission, not only of investigation but of founding upon the evidence it secures a stringent set of regulations, with heavy penalties for disobedience of the same. The *Witness* also says in this connection. "The Railway Commission, too, would find it a good subject for investigation as to how far it is true that certain railway officials wink at disobedience to the rules on the part of the men as long as there is not an accident. The men will assure you, on some railways, that the rules are all right if the men were permitted to live up to them. But an engineer who followed the rules exactly would make bad time, and would (so they say) be 'pulled' from his engine for a week or a month as a punishment. They therefore 'take chances' and disregard rules with the knowledge of the officials. If this is true, it is a most perilous condition of things, and the Railway Commission cannot set to work too soon to find out all about it. Another thing in which reform is needed is in the inquiry by a coroner's jury. Many people would, indeed, today, in all cases of seriousness, abolish the coroner's jury altogether. The services of the jurymen are naturally given grudgingly, as it is forced and unpaid labor; the jury is inexperienced and haphazard in receiving and rejecting evidence and in arriving at conclusions; and half the time there are no conclusions, and the other half the conclusions of a jury are not carried into effect. If all railway accidents were investigated by a commission of experts, as in the case of wrecks at sea, and the blame duly apportioned, that would be a step in the right direction; but a step which should keep it close companionship would be one by which adequate punishment should follow criminal negligence, however 'high up' the criminal might be. Various attempts have been made to pass legislation having this purpose, but railway influence is strong at Ottawa on both sides of the House, almost every member enjoys direct favors at the hands of the railway, and nearly all such legislation is blocked. The most of these slaughters could be prevented if legislators were determined."

## Premier Combes' Policy.

If M. Combes shall continue for any considerable time longer to hold the premiership of France, and it seems probable that he will, it is almost certain that the relations which have subsisted between France and the Vatican since the time of the first Napoleon will be abrogated and all official relations between Church and State will cease. In a speech delivered at Auxerre, on Sept. 4, Premier Combes traced the policy of the Government during the last two years, and held that the municipal and departmental elections had afforded full evidence that it was approved by the country. Regarding the future the Premier said that he would continue to carry out his policy for national sovereignty, and the complete laicization of society. The religious power, he said, had openly torn up the Concordat, and it was not his intention to try to mend it. The risk of France losing her position as the protector of Catholics in the far East, he contended, was a wholly insufficient motive for foregoing the separation of Church and State, which circumstances had obliged him to inscribe on his programme along side the reduction of military service,

the income tax and workmen's pensions. The policy of M. Combes will doubtless prove exceedingly distasteful to the clergy. It will involve serious problems in connection with the support of the churches and religious institutions of the country, but there can be no doubt that the separation of Church and State in France will eventually result to the advantage of both.

## Urging Mediation.

Some prominent young men in France are discussing the practicability and the duty of mediation in the Russo-Japanese war. It is to be feared that the time has not yet arrived in the opinion of either of the belligerent nations when a cessation of hostilities is possible. But all who reflect on the bloody drama which, with all its indescribable horrors, is being enacted in Manchuria, will surely sympathize with those who would seize the earliest practicable moment for the offering of mediation. In connection with this subject the Paris correspondent of the London *Times* says:—"M. de Lanessan repeats his appeal for mediation by one or other of the powers previously made by himself and M. Jean Dupuy, another ex Minister of the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet. He no longer suggests that France and Britain should take direct action, but should support the initiative, which, he seems to think, might be taken with a greater chance of success by the United States or Germany, by Germany better even than by the United States. The question as to whether the German Emperor would assume the task of mediator would, in M. Lanessan's opinion, depend upon the attitude of France and Britain. He says that if they cannot intervene directly at least it would be possible for them to prompt the action of a mediator who would have a better chance of being heard by the belligerents. *The Debat*, discussing M. Lanessan's proposition, considers it the duty of the Government to avoid compromising by premature zeal a proceeding which perhaps may prove more timely at a later stage."

## The Peace River District.

There are differences of opinion in respect to the resources of the great Peace River district in the far Northwest. By some who have explored the country it is held that its agricultural capabilities have in current reports been greatly overstated. This, it appears, is not the opinion of Mr. Alex. Livingstone of Winnipeg who has just returned to that city from the Peace River country where he spent eighteen months exploring for coal and timber. He went to the head waters of the Peace and explored the region thoroughly. Last winter he covered nine hundred miles on snow-shoes, each man of the party carrying his own outfit on his back. With the exception of tea, no provisions were taken, and fish and game were entirely depended upon for sustenance. Mr. Livingstone states that there are vast tracts of magnificent land in the territory traversed by him, and declares that it is the coming section of the west. He says one cannot get a fair conception of the richness of the country by merely traversing the waterways and making observations from the embankments. The country must be traversed and investigated in detail to gain a proper knowledge of the value of the land for agricultural and other industrial purposes.

—The Paris Journal's Liao Yang correspondent, having ridden to Tien Tsin, sends the following uncensored despatch under date of Sept. 12. "The first part of the campaign may be considered lost. The Russian army has retreated northward in the direction of Tie Pass or further. The Russian army's inferiority in men, guns and enthusiasm prevented Kurapatkin's resisting longer at Liao Yang or achieving at Bantai a victory which would have obliged the Japanese to fall back. The Japanese will shortly triumphantly enter Mukden. The Russian general staff now estimates the Japanese forces at from 450,000 to 500,000. The Russian army will reconcentrate in the north, but it needs several months in order to fill up the losses in a number of corps, which must be doubled, and to replace reservists by active troops. A Russian offensive movement will be impossible for a long time. Should Russia be determined to continue the effort it might still win, but at a cost wholly disproportionate to the results. As an impartial witness I am convinced that it will be to the best interests of the belligerents to sink national pride and by mutual concessions end a war which otherwise will ruin both."