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Lord Curzon and the Buddhists

Lord Curzon, the Vice-Roy of India, has exposed himself to some apparently well-deserved criticism by his action in recognizing and appointing the High Priest of the Buddhists in Burma. A very strong agitation on the part of the missionaries there indicates that the matter will not be allowed to rest. The question was dealt with at the annual meetings of the Conference of Baptist missionaries at Bassein on Oct. 15 and 16, and also at the annual meeting of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, at which over four thousand native Christians were present, the following resolution was passed: "Whereas, the Government of India has hitherto steadily pursued the policy of religious neutrality, and whereas, it is reported that at a state function at Mandalay, His Excellency, the Viceroy, urged Buddhists to cling to their religion and at another state function at Aligarh urged Mohammedans to do the same thing, and whereas, His Excellency has decided to recognize a Thatanabaing for Upper Burma, bestow on him a sanad and an official seal, and deal with him for administrative purposes" although the late Earl of Dufferin and Ava, as Vice-roy of India, refused a similar request of the Buddhists of Upper Burma at the time of the annexation, on the ground that it was precluded by the avowed policy of religious neutrality of the Government of India, and "whereas this policy is unduly and unjustly partial to one religious body by giving a state recognition to its head, resolved, that we deplore this new policy of the present Vice-roy and urgently desire that the time-honored, avowed policy of religious neutrality be strictly adhered to by the Government of India.

Work for Parliament.

It is said that the Government expects the approaching session of Parliament to be a short one. But this is a matter which the Government does not have within its power, and the proven ability and inclination of our Parliament for protracted discussion makes it improbable that the session will be very short, and especially in view of the fact that the whole subject of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway is to be opened up again. In addition to the usual public business which must be disposed of, a very considerable amount of private legislation will be presented. Notices has already been given of some sixty or seventy items. Among these are the following: The Pontiac & Interprovincial Railway for power to build from the terminus of the Ottawa, Northern & Western to Ferguson's Point, in Pontiac, and thence across the Ottawa to the C. P. R., between Petawawa and Chalk river, and also a branch from a point opposite Chappleau to Desjardinsville, opposite Pembroke; also to build tramways and to use the government bridge at Chappleau for such purposes; The Canadian Northern Railway for power to acquire or lease the Northern Extension Railway; The Brantford & Hamilton Railway for power to connect these cities; The Guelph and Goderich Railway, for power to connect these places; The Nova Scotia Permanent Benefit Building Society and Savings Fund for an extension of its provincial charter so that it can do business anywhere in the Maritime Provinces.

Some remarks of Mr. Justice Grant-Drink and Crime. ham of England in reference to the fruits of the liquor business called forth from the Croydon Licensed Victuallers' Society a resolution in which Judge Grantham's remarks were characterized as "a vile aspersion upon persons engaged in a lawful and respectable trade." To this resolution Justice Grantham made a reply in the course of which he said: "I have lately been brought face to face for weeks with the conduct of publicans in the carrying on of their business which has resulted in the most heart-breaking crimes that it is possible to imagine,—husbands murdering their wives, wives their husbands, fathers their sons, friends, their own best friends—all through the maddening influence of excessive drinking. Twelve murders, thirteen attempts at murder, and wounding without number that were likely to have ended in murder, as far as the conduct of the criminal was concerned, have been mine and my brother judges' daily fare for the last four weeks on one circuit, and

in almost every case, as appeared in evidence, drink was the cause—drink served by publicans, and not at clubs, and drink proved to have been served in the public-house where the man was openly drunk. These are the men whose conduct I complained of, and these are the men whom the Croydon publicans consider are carrying on a lawful and respectable trade, and on whose behalf they speak of my strictures as being 'vile aspersions.' Among sensible people those who assist a trade to eliminate its worst characters are looked upon as its best friends and not its worst enemies. If the trade will not help those who are endeavoring to stop this fearful amount of crime caused by public-house drunkenness, its members must not be surprised if measures are introduced which will of necessity affect the good and bad alike."

The War

In the Far East events have followed the course expected. The war which was imminent between Russia and Japan when we last referred to the subject has become actual. Hostilities were opened on the night of the 8th inst. by an attack by means of torpedo boats on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur. The attack appears to have taken the Russians by surprise, and it resulted in very considerable damage to their fleet. Two of the largest Russian battleships and a cruiser were seriously damaged and were beached at the mouth of the harbor in such a position, it is reported, as to prevent the passage of large vessels. The following day the Russian fleet and the forts at Port Arthur were bombarded by Japanese warships and some further damage inflicted. It is further reported that a first class Russian armored cruiser and a torpedo gun vessel were destroyed by the Japanese at Chemulpo. A despatch from Tokio to London gives a summary of the losses sustained by Russia during the first twenty-four hours of the war as follows:

- 1—Battle-ship Retvizan, torpedoed and beached at Port Arthur.
- 2—Battle-ship Caesarovitch, torpedoed and beached at Port Arthur.
- 3—Battle-ship Poltava, hole below waterline, at Port Arthur.
- 4—Armoured cruiser Boyarin, disabled by Japanese fire at Port Arthur.
- 5—Cruiser Palada, torpedoed at Port Arthur and beached.
- 6—Cruiser Novik, hole below waterline at Port Arthur.
- 7—Cruiser Askeld, hole below waterline, at Port Arthur.
- 8—Cruiser Diana, hole below waterline, at Port Arthur.
- 9—First-class armored cruiser Variag, destroyed at Chemulpo, Korea.
- 10—Torpedo gun vessel Korietz, destroyed at Chemulpo, Korea.
- 11—Gunboat Mandjo, said to have been seized by the Japanese at Nagasaki, Japan.

The same despatch reports that three Russian transports conveying about 1,000 troops were captured by Japanese war vessels off the coast of Korea. It is evident that Japan was fully prepared and ready to take full advantage of her opportunity as soon as negotiations were broken off. The Japanese fleet engaged in the attack on Port Arthur is said to have consisted of seventeen armored vessels and was under the command of Vice Admiral Togo. A despatch to St. Petersburg from the Russian Viceroy Alexieff, after the bombardment of Port Arthur, reports the Russian losses as two naval officers and 51 men wounded, nine men killed, and on the coast batteries one man killed and three wounded. It also reports one battleship and three cruisers were much damaged.

During the past few days there has been a flood of despatches from European capitals and the Far East, assuming to give information respecting the progress of the war but really adding very little to our knowledge of the situation. From all accounts it would appear that the seriousness of the damage inflicted by the Japanese upon the Russian fleet at Port Arthur was not exaggerated in the previous despatches. It also appears that at Chemulpo three Russian war vessels were destroyed instead of two as previously reported. It has been reported that the Russian Baltic fleet has been ordered to the East. A later despatch, however, says that the Russian Admiralty stamps this story as nonsense, alleging that the Baltic fleet is ice-bound at Kronstadt. Two Japanese merchant steamers

were shelled and one of them sunk by Russian war vessels, between Sakato and Ontaru. This is officially confirmed from Tokio and the event is said to have excited strong feeling on the part of Japan. The Japanese have considerable forces in Korea and have occupied the capital. Their attempts to land forces in Manchuria have apparently not been crowned with great success. It is reported that of 600 Japanese soldiers landed at Taliu-Wen 410 were captured by the Cossacks and the remainder escaped to their ships. It is now reported that 12,000 Japanese troops were landed at Dove Bay where they were met by a Russian force which drove them back.

The Baltimore

Fire.

The fire which swept the business section of Baltimore on Sunday, the 7th inst. was in its destruction of property one of the most disastrous in the history of the United States. Some estimates place the loss far in excess of even the great Chicago fire of 1872. The burned district is said to be fully two miles square—two miles square of utter desolation. Scores and scores of buildings which were palatial, modern and so-called fire-proof have been turned into shapeless masses of blackened debris. The fire burned out every wholesale house of note in the city, swept along through the Baltimore and Fayette streets section through prominent office buildings, banks and brokerage offices and Stock Exchange in the financial section, then went on through the wholesale and export trade sections, centering about Exchange Place. It finally brought up at the Falls where it invaded the lumber district. The property loss is of course very large. A Baltimore paper estimates it at from \$75,000,000 to \$100,000,000, which is probably a conservative estimate. The loss of life in connection with the fire is happily very small.

Another Railway

Wreck.

The serious wreck on the Intercolonial Railway noted in these columns last week has been followed by one still more serious on the Canadian Pacific. The latter occurred on Tuesday of last week near Arnprior, and about sixty miles west of Ottawa. The disaster was caused by the collision of two express trains, known as the C. P. R. "Soo" trains, one running east and the other west. According to the instructions the trains were to cross at Sand Point station, but the west bound train which reached that point first failed to remain there, and a mile farther west the two trains came together with terrific force, with the result that fourteen persons—six trainmen and four passengers—were killed, and some thirty others more or less seriously injured. According to the reported statement of Conductor Nidd of the west bound train the responsibility for the disaster rests with him and with his engineer, John Dudley. Conductor Nidd had received his orders at Ottawa and knew that he was to cross the east bound train at Sand Point which is a small station where the trains do not usually stop. He did not forget his orders, but seems to have trusted to his engineer, and in the dark of the early morning the train slipped by without his knowing it. How Engineer Dudley, who escaped from the wreck with somewhat serious injuries, came to disregard his orders is not explained. Both men are said to be greatly distressed over the result of their failure to carry out the orders placed in their hands. It is of course easy to make a mistake of this kind, but when the consequences involved are so terrible, mistakes are unpardonable. It is hardly a comforting reflection for the railway traveller how much depends for the safety of life and limb on the constant alertness and vigilance of a few fallible minds.

Political

Eight by-elections for the Dominion House take place on Tuesday of this week. One of them is in St. John city, to fill the vacancy made by the resignation of Hon. A. G. Blair. The Government candidate is Hon. H. A. McKeown, who is opposed in the Conservative interest by J. W. Daniel, M. D. In West Queens, P. E. I. Horace Hazard is the Government candidate, and A. A. McLean Conservative. There are also four elections in Quebec Province and two in Ontario. The Quebec constituencies are St. James, Montreal, St. Hayacinthe, Hochelaga, and Montmagny. The Ontario constituencies are East Lambton and East Bruce. All these constituencies, except the two in Ontario, gave liberal majorities at the last election.