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CURRENT TOPICS.

Writing for readers in all parts of the Dominion, we do not usually enter closely into the discussion of local questions, except in so far as the principles involved seem to us to be of wider than local application. For this reason we have, in referring to the Sunday-car question, touched only upon the broader aspects of the controversy. As the day set apart for the voting approaches there are, however, two or three points which, though only of local bearing immediately, are of so much importance to the interests of all concerned, and which seem to be in so much danger of being overlooked until too late, that special emphasis should be given to them on all hands. These points, which have been rightly insisted upon by the *Globe*, are, that before the vote is taken, clear understandings and binding agreements should be had to assure the citizens, first, that no employee of the railway shall be permitted to work seven days in the week; second, that the city shall receive its percentage of the profits

upon the Sunday traffic, as upon that of the other days of the week; and third, that the Sunday service shall be subject to the regulations of the City Engineer exactly as that of other days. The first point is of special importance, both in its relation to the interests of the employees, and as involving a far-reaching sanitary and moral principle. The other two are legal questions in which it may be that the city's rights are already secure, but a clear understanding at the outset may prevent costly litigation with the bad blood it is pretty sure to engender. It surely devolves upon the Mayor and Council to see to it that no loophole is left for escape from the legal and moral obligations of the Company to its employees and to the city. If these points are neglected, a worse blunder than any that has hitherto been committed, will lie at the door of the guardians of the city's interests.

A motion providing in effect that the Irish representatives in the Imperial Parliament under the Home Rule arrangement should not be permitted to vote on any question except motions that may be made in amendment of the Home Rule Bill, was negatived in the British Commons by a majority of only forty. During the debate which arose on this motion, Mr. Chamberlain declared that the only just arrangement would be the total exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster. To most Canadians, accustomed to the working of the federal system, it must seem marvellous that Conservatives and Unionists in England, anxious above all things to conserve the unity of the Empire, could for a moment contemplate the exclusion of the representatives of Ireland from the great Council of the nation. Such exclusion would do more than anything else of which we can conceive to promote the real separation of Ireland from the Empire. Irishmen would naturally cease to take any special interest in the affairs of a Parliament in whose deliberations they had no voice. Instead of being gradually won over, under the conciliatory influence of the policy which removes old causes of exasperation and leaves them free to manage their own local affairs, to the position of loyal subjects of the Empire, they would be placed under the circumstances most favorable to the decay of whatever national feeling they may now possess. They would have a fresh grievance in being held responsible for the character and effects of

legislation in which they had no voice. The old cry, "Taxation without representation is tyranny," would soon be raised, and would probably be the precursor of a movement for absolute independence. In the face of such consequences, the danger of meddlesome or factious interference by Irish members in questions local to other portions of the United Kingdom sinks into comparative insignificance. Should such interference ever become troublesome, some remedy would speedily be devised, but the alienation of Ireland from Imperial interests would be permanent and its consequences irremediable.

An instructive object-lesson with regard to the folly and wickedness of retaliatory tariffs is now being set before the world in the tariff war between Russia and Germany. It is evidently a war between the politicians of the two countries. A few men at the head of the respective governments are venting their mutual piques at the expense of the masses of the people of the two countries. What could be more unstatesmanlike! The industrious citizens of the two countries are in consequence of the jealousies or rivalries of their political leaders, prevented from buying from each other freely the things which it would be to their mutual advantage to buy, and from selling to each other the things which it would be to their mutual advantage to sell! Such is European statesmanship in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Is it to be wondered at that Socialism is making rapid growth in the one country and Nihilism in the other? It is pretty safe to predict that the day is not far distant when the people will take such matters into their own hands and insist that the necessities of life shall not be made artificially dear, and the exchange of products artificially difficult, to gratify the piques, or prejudices, or pre-judged economic traditions of the men at the head of the State. An iron despotism may make the process of emancipation slow for Russians, but the intelligence of Germany will not long permit the people's bread to be made dear to suit the interests of selfish land-owners or the false economic notions of rulers. A more effective combination of circumstances for educational purposes could hardly be imagined than that which is furnished by the conjunction of increased taxation rendered necessary by the Army Bill, the pressure of hard times caused by a poor harvest, and the