

PROMINENT TOPICS.

RUSSIA AND PERSIA.—To counteract the effect of the damage done to Russia's prestige by the war disasters the Czar has invited the Shah of Persia to visit St. Petersburg, where every possible effort will be made to impress that potentate with the military power of Russia. Troops are being concentrated there so as to make the display as imposing as possible. If the Persian monarch is inquisitive and not over polite he might ask the Czar, why his army retreated in Manchuria. The greater the military parade, the greater the victory of the enemy, the Shah is more likely to be impressed by the power of Japan than by that of Russia when he reviews the Czar's army at St. Petersburg.

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TREATY OF PEACE SIGNED.—The treaty which establishes peace between Russia and Japan and defines the terms arranged for its maintenance was signed by their respective plenipotentiaries on the afternoon of 5th inst. The conditions are in the main those already announced. In brief they are as follows: Japan is recognized as the predominant power in Corea, Port Arthur and district are to belong to Japan, the rights possessed by Russia in conformity with the lease by Russia of Port Arthur and Dalny, together with the lands and waters adjacent, shall pass over in their entirety to Japan, but the properties and rights of Russian subjects are to be safeguarded and respected; the Governments of Russia and Japan engage themselves reciprocally not to put any obstacles to the general measures (which shall be alike for both nations) that China may take for the development of the commerce and industry of Manchuria; Russia cedes to Japan the southern part of Sakhalin Island as far north as the 50th degree of north latitude, together with the islands depending thereon. The right of free navigation is assured in the bays of La Perouse and Tartare; Japan is ceded fishing rights in the Russian waters of the sea of Japan; the sea of Okhotsk and Bering sea; Manchuria is to be simultaneously evacuated by both Russian and Japanese troops; both countries being concerned in this evacuation their situations are absolutely identical. All rights acquired by private persons and companies shall remain intact; the two high contracting parties engage themselves to renew the commercial treaty existing between the two Governments prior to the war, in all its vigour, with slight modifications in details, and with a most-favoured nation clause.

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BOTH COUNTRIES DISSATISFIED.—If the current news is reliable both the people of Russia and Japan are disappointed at the terms of peace. Probably this is a good sign as it proves that neither power has over-riden the other in the negotiations, nor

has either of them secured what would have been likely to incite a desire for revenge.

The wise course for both peoples will be to strive after the enlargement of their commerce, the economical administration of public affairs, and, especially for Russia, to establish such conditions as will develop the productive capacities of the people and the soil, and so improve their social and physical conditions as to restore order amongst them and promote their happiness.

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INAUGURATION OF TWO NEW PROVINCES.—On the 1st inst., the new Province of Alberta was inaugurated, and on 4th inst., the new Province of Saskatchewan. The ceremonies attendant upon the former event were performed at Edmonton and the latter at Regina, which cities are now, respectively, the capitals of the new provinces. The Dominion now comprises 9 fully organized provinces each with a Legislative Assembly, a Lieutenant-Governor and all the equipment for self-government under the Federal Constitution.

By an act passed last Session of the Dominion Parliament the new provinces were created out of the four territories of Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Athabasca. Their combined area, land only, is 536,806 square miles, and water, 13,539 square miles. At Confederation, in 1867, the Dominion had 611,243 square miles of land, Manitoba with 64,327 was added in 1870, British Columbia with 370,101 in 1841, Prince Edward Island with 2,184 in 1873, the Keewatin District with 456,997 in 1876, the 4 districts just made into two provinces, with 536,806, in 1882, the Yukon with 196,327 in 1898, and Mackenzie, Ungava and Franklin in 1895 with 1,381,743 square miles. The total land area of Canada is now 3,619,819 square miles, or nearly seven times what it contained at Confederation. Newfoundland is now needed to complete the unity of British Colonies on this side the Atlantic, north of the West Indies.

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THE INAUGURAL CEREMONIES ON BOTH OCCASIONS were graced and dignified by the presence of His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Hon. W. Patterson, M.P., Minister of Customs, Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P., the celebrated author, with several members of the Federal Parliament. The chief ceremony was the swearing in of the Hon. G. H. V. Bulyea, as Lt.-Governor of Alberta, and of the Hon. A. E. Forget, as Lt.-Governor of Saskatchewan. Earl Grey spoke on each occasion. He regarded each new province as a fresh source of strength to the Empire and of lustre to the British Crown. His Excellency congratulated the settlers upon enjoying "the opportunity of a happy and comfortable home in an ideal climate, under a just, freedom-loving government, an opportunity many in the old country are look-