

Messenger and Visitor.

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Our Penitentiaries. The annual report of the penitentiaries of the Dominion, if it is not very cheerful reading, may at least present matter for profitable reflection. We are not able to congratulate ourselves that the convict population of Canada is diminishing. On the contrary it seems to be keeping pace pretty nearly with the increase in the country's population. The total number of convicts in the penitentiaries of Canada, at the close of the last fiscal year, was 1382 as compared with 1361 at the close of the previous year—an increase of 21. Fifty-six pardons were granted and there were sixteen deaths, of which two were suicides. In respect to age 131 of the convicts are under 20 years of age; 637 between 20 and 30; 339 from 30 to 40; 168 from 40 to 50; 85 from 50 to 60, and 22 over 60.

As to duration of sentences 230 were in for 2 years; 289 for 3 years; 122 for 4 years; 271 for 5 years; 26 for 6 years; 105 for 7 years; 15 for 8 years; 34 for 10 years; 21 for 12 years; 34 for 14 years; 26 for 15 years; 18 for 20 years; 57 for life and the balance for varying terms.

With regard to racial divisions, civil condition and social habits the following statistics are given: White, 1,287; colored, 55; Indian, 23; Halfbreed, 7; Mongolian, 10. Single, 893; married, 482; widowed, 7. Abstainers, 124; temperate, 783; intemperate, 475.

Education does not seem to have had a very strong influence in keeping people out of the penitentiary, for, of the total 1,382 in confinement at the end of the fiscal year 1,008 were able to read and write; 141 could read only, and 233 could not read.

As to origin 1,194 were British and of these 957 were Canadians; foreigners footed up 188, of whom 133 were natives of the United States, 11 Germans and 10 to Chinese.

The following table showing the relative proportion of convicts to denominational population is based upon the returns of the last census:

	No of convicts.	Percent of popul'n.	No. to each 10,000 of popul'n.
Church of England	292	21.7	4.56
Roman Catholic	656	47.4	3.25
Baptists	80	5.7	2.66
Lutheran	16	1.1	2.66
Methodists	187	13.5	2.22
Presbyterians	120	8.7	1.6

The Presbyterians are to be congratulated that so small a fraction of the criminal population of the country comes from the communities where their influence prevails. The net expenditure upon the penitentiaries for the year is \$511,825, making about \$224 per convict.

Leading to War. At 1.15 o'clock on Tuesday morning, the Conference Committee of the two branches of the American Congress reached an agreement in reference to the Cuban resolutions, and after being adopted by the Senate and the House of Representatives and receiving the signatures of Vice-President Hobart and Speaker Reed, the resolutions were the same day forwarded to the President. As finally adopted the resolutions read as follows:

- Resolved, by the senate and the house of representatives of the United States in congress assembled:
 - First, that the people of the Island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent.
 - Second, that it is the duty of the United States to demand, and the government of the United States does hereby demand that the government of Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters.
 - Third, that the President of the United States be, and hereby is, directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States and to call into the

active service of the United States the militia of the several states to such an extent as may be necessary to carry these resolutions into effect.

Fourth, that the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination when that is accomplished to leave the government and control of the island to its people.

About noon on Wednesday Congress was notified that the resolutions had been signed by the President. The announcement was received in the House with great applause. A copy of the resolutions, with the President's ultimatum to Spain, was sent about the same time to Senor Polo de Barnabe, Spanish Minister at Washington. Senor Polo de Barnabe immediately replied in a brief note, acknowledging the receipt of the President's communication and requesting his passports. These were duly forwarded and the same evening the Spanish Minister with his family and suite left Washington for Toronto, by way of Buffalo and Niagara. The same day President McKinley cabled to the American Minister at Madrid his ultimatum to the Spanish Government, in accordance with the action of Congress and requiring an answer from Spain by midnight of Saturday. The Spanish Government, however, having been apprised by Senor Polo of the action of the United States, did not wait to receive President McKinley's ultimatum, but at once informed Minister Woodford that diplomatic relations between the two countries were terminated and sent him his passports. In this way a state of war was reached without a formal declaration.

The War and Canadian Interests.

What effect will the war between the United States and Spain, have on the commercial interests of Canada? This is a question which, very naturally, is being quite eagerly discussed by our merchants and others more or less directly interested. It is a question not easy to answer definitely. While war was merely a probability it was, of course, embarrassing to trade, since it created uncertainty. The war, if it came, would render certain lines of business unprofitable, while it would open up opportunities along other lines. The effect was to hold enterprise and capital in suspense until the question, whether or not there was to be war, should be determined. But now that it is settled that the United States is to engage in a war which will tax her resources to a very considerable degree, commercial conditions are thereby altered. There will be a very large expenditure of capital in promoting war. New business will be created. Industry in many departments will be stimulated, and, with a good harvest, there may probably be something of a boom in business during the present year. As the prospect of war has injured Canadian trade, so on the other hand, this country will share to some extent in any stimulation of business which the war may effect. Then, it is probably that, if the war be prolonged, the shipping interests of Canada will benefit more or less by the changed conditions which will result. The fishing business of the United States may have to be carried on largely under the British flag, and the difficulties under which American vessels will engage in the coasting trade may also favor the shipping interests of Canada. If Spain can effect a blockade of United States ports, ocean trade would, to a considerable extent, be diverted to Canadian ports, but it is quite improbable that Spain can establish any effective blockade of the Atlantic ports of the United States. Whatever impulse the war may give to trade, either in the United States or in Canada, will be, of course, spasmodic and unnatural, to be followed by a corresponding depression when

the war shall be over. The result of the war will be to destroy an immense amount of property, to say nothing of the lives sacrificed, and to add to the taxation of the nations engaging in it. The United States, if victorious, can hardly hope to make Spain pay for all the cost of the war. True, the United States will probably have Cuba if it so desires, but that, in the opinion of most men of sober judgment, would be an acquisition of very doubtful value.

The French Language in Canada.

However praiseworthy may have been the spirit of generosity toward a conquered people which prompted Great Britain to recognize French, co-ordinately with English, as an official language in the parliament and the courts of Lower Canada, there can be no dispute that, considered in the interests of a strong and united nationality, that recognition of the French language was a serious blunder. There is no Briton worthy of the name who does not sympathize with the French colonists of Canada in their love of their motherland, its history, its traditions, its literature; there is none who would interfere arbitrarily to prevent their perpetuating the use of their own mother tongue in their homes, their churches and in the transaction of business. But the recognition of French as an official language was a doubtful kindness to the French people of Canada and a great mistake considered in the interests of political and social unity. With English as the only official language, the French colonists would have come quickly to recognize that, in fact as in name, Canada was British, and, to their own advantage as well as the country's, they would have abandoned the vain hope of building up a French nationality in North America. The English language would have become, to a vastly greater degree than it is now, the language of the marts, the schools and the homes. The mental life of the people would have been nourished on English literature, the newspapers would have been English and generally the people would have come under the influence of British ideals and examples in a far larger degree than has been the case in fact. The perpetuation of French as an official language in Canada has tended to build up two peoples, foreign to each other not only in race and religion, but in language, in literature, in national traditions and aspirations. The country has therefore lacked an element of strength which it would possess if its people were blended into one homogeneous nationality with one language, one literature, one heart, one purpose. The French people of Quebec province still cling very tenaciously to their language and their national traditions. Alluding to the abolition of the French as an official language in Louisiana, the 'Signal,' a French paper of Montreal, draws from it the lesson that this should be an incitement to French Canadians to be more and more attached to the speech of their ancestors. "In Canada," the 'Signal' says, "our position is strong, our entrenchments are unassailable, and the beautiful language of France will always be one of the two languages in the land. Let us speak French always and everywhere, and above all, let us speak good French; let us encourage and help one another; let us not give up a single inch of ground to our neighbors who already have more than we have, and who are monopolizers by nature and temperament; let us be firm and make ourselves respected."

—By an inadvertence two selected articles which appear on our second page are not credited to their proper sources. The article on "The War in Cuba," by Dr. Diaz, is from the New York Examiner, and the article on "The Late George Müller," from the Chicago Standard.