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CURRENT TOPICS.

Some excellent suggestions for preserving and perpetuating valuable documents bearing on the early history of the Province were made by Dr. Scadding, in his letter in our columns last week. We hope that they may receive the attention they merit. No one, we believe, is better qualified to speak on this subject than Dr. Scadding, as no one, probably, has done more to collect and preserve facts and incidents of local history than he. His proposal that a volume of carefully selected and edited documents be issued each year under the direction of the Government and Legislature seems to us well worth considering. Why should not a historical branch be added to some one of the existing departments of the Government, say that of Education or Agriculture? Scarcely less practicable and valuable is the suggestion that all such

volumes should be issued in octavo instead of in the forbidding quarto form. Indeed we are not sure that duodecimo would not be better still. Such a series of volumes, including gradually and systematically whatever of value has hitherto been, or may from year to year be published by voluntary societies, the County Councils, etc., would in course of time become invaluable to the historian and the archaeologist, and to all intelligent citizens interested in their pursuits and discoveries.

On the whole the great civic struggle in Montreal seems to have resulted in a decided victory for the friends of reform. The English vote was strongly in favour of the Mayor-elect, Alderman Villeneuve, whether simply on his merits, or as a matter of good faith with the French citizens, who claimed that under the tacit agreement for alternating French and English in the mayoralty, it was the turn for one of their nationality, we do not know. More than half the successful candidates for the Council are new men, most of them, we believe, in good standing, while a number of those who had been tried and found wanting were remanded to private life. The struggle in Montreal was but one of a series which have been in progress for some time past in most of the large cities of the continent. Good citizens are everywhere becoming tired and ashamed of submitting to the rule of incompetency and dishonesty in civic affairs, and are waging a vigorous warfare on behalf of pure and efficient local government. The battle is a long and hard one, but little by little the victory is being won. An influential and successful part in the Montreal contest was taken by the Volunteer Electoral League, whose existence and objects have been more than once referred to in these columns. We congratulate the members of the League on the measure of success they have gained. A debt of gratitude is due by the citizens to those who, at no small sacrifice of their own private interests, devote time, money, and energy in a disinterested effort to improve the personnel, purify the methods, and elevate the tone of civic administration.

The first-fruits of Minister Bowell's visit to Australia are very pleasantly manifest in the presence among us of Sir Thomas McIlwraith, ex-Premier of Queensland. There is every reason to hope, as he himself said at the luncheon given in his honor by the Hon. Frank Smith, that he is the precursor of many of our cousins who

will visit us from the Antipodes. Sir Thomas informed his hearers that this is his second visit to Toronto, he having been here fourteen years ago, though only for a day. Let us hope that half that time may not pass before he may visit us again to find the projects of an Australian-Canadian cable, lines of fast Canadian steamships crossing both the Atlantic and the Pacific and a brisk intercolonial trade fully realized. We surely may expect, too, that by that time the population of that wonderful country to the west of Winnipeg of which he spoke, and of the central and eastern provinces as well, will be counted by the million instead of by the thousand. May we not still further hope that the significant hint conveyed by Sir Thomas McIlwraith's assurance that his fellow-countrymen are ready to trade with us whenever we are ready to take their wool, may take root in the minds of Government and people, and that we may all become wise enough to know that in order to become the great manufacturing country which he thinks we should become, we must have not only cheap food but cheap metal, and cheap materials of all kinds, and that if we would enlarge our trade with other peoples on either side of the globe we must be prepared to give as well as to take. Meanwhile, Canadians will welcome our honored visitor and others who may come after him from far Australia, in the earnest hope of better acquaintanceship and increasingly close and cordial relations, both personal and commercial, in the near future.

The Conservatives and Liberal-Unionists in England never tire of challenging the Government to appeal to the people on the question of Home Rule, as defined by the Bill which was forced through the Commons and rejected by the Upper House. They are sanguine that the result would be dire defeat for the Gladstonians. It is quite possible that such would be the case, at the present juncture. All the forces of reaction would be at their best. The Government is no doubt wise in preferring to pass other of the radical measures outlined on the Newcastle programme and to make the issue between the Commons and the Lords as broad and distinct as possible, before going to the country. It is worth while to observe, however, that, read in the light of the fuller knowledge brought by the English papers, the result of the Horn-castle election is by no means so decisive as we were at first led to suppose. The statements of a leading Toronto newspaper, to