

PROMINENT TOPICS.

The longshore men's strike holds the chief place in public interest locally. The men seem obstinate in demanding recognition of their union, which the shippers are as determined in refusing. The situation is a more difficult one than it would be were the issue a question of wages or hours for on such matters a compromise is possible, but, whether a union shall be recognized or not is akin to a question of principle which admits of no compromise.

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It is one of the worst features of such a dispute that the men are so liable to be controlled by leaders who have neither the education, the experience, nor the mental capacity to form a sound judgment upon an economic question that has more than one aspect. Labourers, however, well meaning, however, inclined to be fair are not accustomed to consider questions from any but a personal, or class standpoint. Their sphere of observation is a very narrow one, they are unable to enter into the wider considerations that weigh with the employers, and strange to say, they have no sympathy whatever with those of their fellow men who have too much self-respect to sink their individual rights and personal independence in the tyrannous bondage of the clique who control a union.

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If they would agree to work peacefully alongside men who prefer to stand upon their personal independence, there need be no dispute, all parties would be free, some free to join the union, some to stay outside, and the employers would be free and employ men regardless of their relation to a union. But No! some men must impose their will upon their fellow men, however, it may humiliate and injure them, or however, such tyranny may damage trade and themselves in the long run.

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It is a long vista no doubt, but there is no prospect of these union disturbances coming to an end except what education opens up. Let any one converse with the better class of artisans and he will discover that their superior intelligence makes them rebel against union tyranny, but, in such organizations influence and power are not gained by superior intelligence, but by pandering to class ignorances and prejudices.

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The effect of the strike is seen in vessels calling at Three Rivers to unload part of their cargo. The C.P.R. steamers are all to unload at that port. Passengers will be landed at Quebec and sent on by the railway to Montreal. What will the men do when full provisions is made for their work being done by others? There is a hard time ahead of some hundreds of families who will not find the public as sympathetic as usual when the pinch comes next winter. Will the union pay rents and find fuel and food for those thrown permanently out of work by the strike?

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The City Council has decided to reject Mr. Carnegie's offer of a sum of money towards erecting

a City Library. They will feel quite lonely after this decision for the library question has been the constant companion of the Council for a long period. It has been served up in as many forms as a dish of meat can be by a French chef. What a farcical record is now the interminable debates over who should be authorized to select the books, and where should the Library be erected?

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It will surprise some who imagine that imports into the United Kingdom are free of duties to learn that the Customs revenue for 1902-3 amounted to \$172,165,000. The Inland Revenue was \$160,500,000, property and income tax, \$194,000,000. The total revenue was \$757,760,000, of which the army took, \$397,200,000 and the navy, \$155,850,000. The reduction of 3d in the pound income tax is estimated to reduce the revenue from that source by \$36,000,000.

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The waning interest in great International Exhibitions has been shown by the apathetic notices of the opening of the St. Louis Exposition on 30th ult. Addresses were delivered by President Roosevelt and Ex-President Cleveland. The former predicted that, if certain qualities were developed in the American people, "then in the century now beginning we shall make of this Republic the freest and most orderly, the most just and the most mighty nation which has ever come forth from the womb of time." That is an easy way of prophesying, it is akin to a farmer saying, "if I cultivate my land thoroughly, if I sow it with good seed, if the weather is propitious, I shall have good crops." How are these great qualities to be infused into the American people, how are they to be made to abhor corruption, to exercise self-restraint, to regard the right of others? The President had no word to say on these vital questions.

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All the fire risks in Montgomery, 12 miles east of Washington, have been cancelled owing to fear last incendiaries will destroy the town as they have threatened. They demanded \$2,500 on penalty of having the town wiped out. This is a new firm of risk. Men who use such threats deserve the allowance.

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The Imperial Bank building to be erected on corner St. James and McGill streets will be four storeys high, but made so that other storeys can be added. The Ottawa Bank building, St. James St., is to be eight storeys high.

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The calling out of the Militia to guard the vessels in port and protect the men engaged in unloading and loading them has elicited comments of various kinds, some regarding this course as having been unnecessary as the police force was, in their judgment, strong enough to maintain order. In such a matter the judgment of the Chief of Police and the Mayor must prevail, as upon them falls the responsibility of preserving the peace.