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Artist and Editor J. W. BENGOUGH.
Associate Editor PHILLIPS THOMPSON.



Comments

ON THE

Cartoons.

SOMEWHAT TANGLED.

—The Dominion Government's Anti-Reciprocity candidate in Victoria was elected by even a greater majority than the same Government's Reciprocity candidate in Napierville a few weeks ago. When these two brand new members walk into the House,

each hanging lovingly on an arm of the Premier, who will wear a cross-eyed smile for the occasion, this unique episode of politics will be complete. Our cartoon is pretty sure to be belied. It is built on the assumption that the Reciprocity professions of the member-elect for Napierville were sincere, and that in case of a vote being taken on the question he, in company with Hon. J. A. Chapleau, will be found voting with the Opposition. Sir John is in no great danger of being tangled as represented, because it is not the ordinary practice of members to act strictly on principle. In this particular case skeptical people are inclined to doubt that there was much principle involved, anyway. Mr. Paradis apparently grabbed at Reciprocity as the handiest weapon with which to slay his opponent, seeing that Free Trade sentiment was strong in the constituency. In like manner it may be fairly questioned whether Mr. Fairhairn, in Victoria, is in reality a believer in the Restriction policy. He is credited with an average amount of intelligence, and probably knows as well as anybody else that the farmers of his riding would be benefited and not injured by an extension of their market. There was a joker in the pack in this contest, in the shape of a railway bonus, which really won the game. So that, in reality, there may be nothing unique

about the episode after all; it simply amounts to the election of two straight out supporters of Sir John. But it is not courteous to go behind the returns and expose the true inwardness of the affair. We must deal with the case as it is presented to us ostensibly, and as it will go into history. And looked at in that light, Sir John's achievement in electing almost simultaneously a member for and one against Reciprocity, is worthy to rank amongst his most remarkable performances.

UNDER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.—The movement in favor of free text books, by way of rounding out our system of "free schools," is gaining headway. While, upon the first mention of the proposal, opposition is likely to arise in the mind of the average man, a little consideration of the subject is pretty sure to convince him of its soundness and utility. The theory of our system is a free education for every boy and girl in the country. We spread the feast, and extend a general invitation; nay, we are supposed to compel them to come in. But we find that there are a good many thousands who do not respond to the call, and whom we are practically unable to force. There may be a number of reasons for this absenteeism, but experience in other places has conclusively shown that the expense of text-books to parents in poor circumstances is the most powerful of them. A workingman earning the ordinary current wages, even if he is lucky enough to have steady employment, has a severe task before him in keeping four or five children supplied with school books for four or five years. In many cases it is simply impossible, and the children remain at home. It is hard to see just why the makers of our school system stopped short at free books when provision was made for the supplying by the State of all the other necessary school machinery. Nothing is so necessary as the books, which are the tools of the schoolmaster. We *must* have our population educated; we *must* make attendance at school compulsory, and therefore we *must* remove every reasonable excuse for the absenteeism now complained of. It is understood that this important subject is under the serious consideration of the Ontario Government, and that a measure bearing upon it will be introduced at the next session of the Legislature.

1891.

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OLD Eighteen Ninety had sold out his business to a successor, Young Ninety-one, and was awaiting the arrival of the midnight train, in which he intended taking passage to Oblivion. It was now within a few minutes of train-time, and the two sat in earnest discourse.

"Well, Youngster," said Ninety, in a cheerful tone, "if you bear in mind all I've been telling you, and govern yourself accordingly, I have no doubt you'll make a success of it. You've got a big contract on your hands, though. There are many weighty matters—"

"Let 'em wait, then!" interjected the youth, smartly.

"Now, don't be too fresh, although you are new," cautioned the Departing Year. "I see your trivial pun, but let me tell you this is no time for airy persiflage."

"All right," promptly responded the youngster, "I won't make airy jokes again."

"I was about to tell you," continued the Old Year, without deigning to notice the interruption, "that these matters I have reference to *can't* wait. You've got to settle them, or at least carry them twelve months nearer settlement."

"Would you mind specifying a little?" asked the other, more seriously.

"Well," said Ninety, "there's the Labour Problem for one. I made some slight progress with that, but it's a tough question to deal with, and I don't anticipate that you will be able to do very much with it."

"Oh, you don't know *me*," said Ninety-one, confidently, "You just hold on and see."

"I can't hold on to see, as my time is just about up, but you have my best wishes. I may just mention this—the Labor question is simply the question of justice as between man and man. I think I may claim to have done this much—I have made it clear to a greater number