

THE TRUE WITNESS

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WEDNESDAY.....JANUARY 21, 1885.

ACCORDING to a recent official report on Irish Industries, free trade is having a most damaging effect upon the agricultural industry of the country, and is proving fatal to the growing of cereals. The statistics show that altogether there were during the past year 91,078 acres less under tillage than in 1883.

THE HON. JOHN COSTIGAN, Minister of Inland Revenue, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his birthday on the 1st of February next. The Ottawa Citizen, alluding to the fact, says:—"We understand a number of the hon. member's friends will not allow the occasion to pass by without offering a tribute of good feeling and warm admiration of an upright and honorable career."

A LONDON despatch says the Canadian voyageurs, who enlisted for six months to aid Wolsey's expedition up the Nile, are about to be mustered out of service, and will embark at Alexandria on their homeward voyage in two or three weeks' time. The voyageurs were very successful in handling the Nile crafts, as out of the three hundred boats landed in Egypt no less than two hundred and eighty are still fit for use on the river.

An effort is being made to induce the Irish National and Social Clubs of the English Metropolis to unite in celebrating St. Patrick's Day, this year, by a gigantic demonstration at the Crystal Palace. The political significance which would attach to so colossal a gathering of the Irish people in London would be great, and the national cause would be much benefited thereby. The suggestion has been favorably received, and its authors are confident that it will be adopted by all the clubs. A demonstration on such a broad basis in the heart of England would indeed be a pleasing and moral feature of the national festival.

An influential deputation of merchants, manufacturers, and artisans waited upon the Lord Mayor of London and asked permission for the use of the Guildhall for a meeting to be composed of representatives of all the industries of England and Scotland, to discuss the business depression which exists throughout the United Kingdom. The Lord Mayor refused to grant the request and gave as his principal reason that Henry George was to hold an open air meeting in front of the Royal Exchange at the same time as the Guildhall meeting. The Lord Mayor thought that this would identify the latter assemblage with George's agitation in favor of land nationalization and thus lead to disturbance and mischief.

An American capitalist, of the name of Winans, is making for himself a very unenviable reputation in Scotland. He rented a deer forest from one of the Scotch nobles and set out to bulldoze and tyrannize the poor cottars, as if he were to the manor born. The estate is of immense proportions covering some three or four hundred square miles. Winans cut off all the rights and privileges of the few cottars who happen to live upon this great tract of land. One poor Scotchman who had a pet lamb allowed it to wander within the sacred enclosure and nibble the grass to which it had been accustomed before Mr. Winans landed in Scotland. Winans felt aggrieved over the intrusion of the lamb and sued the cottar for trespass. In vain did the owner of the property explain that the land around the cottage was of no use to the deer forest and that the idea of the lamb doing any damage or interfering with his comfort, was absurd. Winans would listen to nothing. He wanted damages or the cottar removed off the estate. The cottar refused to pay or stir, and the case was pushed through all the courts which have finally decided in favor of the lamb and its owner, condemning Winans to pay the costs, which amount to some fifty thousand dollars. Rather a nice sum for a few blades of grass. Winans' action has

done much to precipitate the land war in Scotland and to embitter the struggle of the people against a system of landlordism that encourages such atrocities against the welfare of a civilized community.

The American Bureau of Agriculture has gathered statistics regarding the cereal crops of the country for the year 1884, which place the production of corn at 1,795,000,000 bushels, and that of wheat at nearly 513,000,000. These are the largest aggregates ever recorded. The New York Herald, commenting on these figures, says: "A large surplus will in either case remain above the wants of the home market. France has raised the duties on American grain and Germany threatens to do the same, for the agricultural depression in both countries is very marked. No doubt a similar movement will be agitated in Great Britain, where the question of 'Shall we grow wheat?' is already being discussed. Meantime our farmers are almost forced to sell at the prevailing low prices, or find it cheaper to use their corn as fuel or to convert it into hogs. Whether the low prices now ruling will so extend the consumption of cereals as to make a market for the surplus remains to be seen. Such an extension would be equivalent to raising the standard of living, and this, if maintained, would be of lasting benefit to mankind. Good food can never be too cheap."

The London press have joined in giving expression to a rather offensive sentiment over the Phelan-Short affair in saying that the murderous onslaught "is viewed by Englishmen with grim satisfaction. It is rather a peculiar gladness to experience because a man was brutally stabbed, and because an American city has been made the scene of a deed of violence and bloodshed. They entertain the idea that new local and Federal laws and a change of policy of an anti-Irish character will be the consequence; but these London newspapers are mistaken in the matter, for a New York contemporary commenting on the "grim satisfaction" aspect of the case says:—"The Phelan-Short affair will be treated in this city from a police and judicial, not a legislative, national, international, sentimental or English-Irish point of view. It will be disposed of in a court of justice without regard to questions of antagonism between England and Ireland. American sentiment as to oppressed Ireland will undergo no change. The popular feeling in regard to the principle of political freedom will remain the same. The English newspapers are wrong if they imagine that they are serving a spirit of retaliation in regard to offences against the peace of our communities with grim satisfaction. Our people have not rejoiced when such offences have been committed in England. Our newspapers have expressed no satisfaction at the shedding of British blood, or the demolition of British structures. On the contrary, the American sentiment has been one of sorrow that such things should be, and consequently of deprecation of the tyrannical policy of England that is provocative of Irish resentment and resistance."

THE PROPOSED COLONIAL COUNCIL.

Another effort has been made to consolidate the scheme of Imperial Federation and give it some definite shape or form. The Marquis of Lorne and Earl Grey, formerly Secretary of State for the colonies, have proposed to create a Federal Council to be composed of the High Commissioners and Agents-General of the British colonies, and to be attached to the colonial department. This proposal has been submitted to the Imperial Government, and the scheme is said to meet with the approval of both Earl Granville, the Foreign Secretary, and of Earl Derby, the Colonial Secretary. Of course the wants and wishes of the colonies count for nothing with these gentlemen. An enterprising correspondent has obtained the views of several of the agents-general of the colonies on the subject, and we find that most of them are strongly opposed to the plan drawn up by Lord Grey and the Marquis of Lorne. The agent-general for the colony of Victoria, Mr. Robert Murray Smith, said that the proposition to have an amalgamated body of colonial envoys to act with the Privy Council was impracticable. It would be a little Parliament in itself, and when it came to the discussion of colonial matters, the interests and needs of the various colonies would be so divergent that nothing could be accomplished. He had noticed that the Marquis of Lorne approved the scheme, but with all respect to the late Governor-General of Canada, he thought his Lordship's views on colonial affairs were bounded by the limits of that Dominion.

Our own High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper, on being questioned regarding the matter pronounced the scheme chimerical, and one that would result in loading up the home government with a lot of petty jealousies which had better be ignored or left to cure themselves. The only ones who seemed to regard the project with favor and to have a good word for it were the agents of small dependencies, who imagine that the proposed council would give them additional importance. The most positive objections came from the representatives of the larger colonies, which in an emergency are quite capable of taking care of themselves.

THE CROFTERS AND THEIR SCOTCH LANDLORDS.

Our readers will well remember with what vigor and persistency the land agitation in Ireland was denounced and condemned by all "lovers of order" and friends of landlordism in and outside the Island. The Scotch and English press were almost unanimous in their ridicule, vituperation and mis-

representation, both of the people and of their representatives. When distress and starvation came upon the tenants, they were laughed at for "passing around the hat." Times have changed, however, and the scene of war has been shifted nearer home. The land agitation in Scotland has assumed immense proportions and its flames are pretty well fanned into a conflagration by the growing distress and misery among the people. The Scotch crofters, in their turn, are now forced to appeal to the charity of the world for help against the rapacity and greed of their landlords. An address signed by a number of Scotch noblemen and landlords has been issued asking aid for the Skye crofters. A correspondent in our esteemed contemporary the Daily Witness takes an original view of that document and treats the Scotch landlords to some fine sarcasm. The Witness writes as follows:—

So long as the rocky island could be made to yield only enough for the existence of these toiling crofters, it is certain that the 'landlords' did not collect rent, although they may have chartered a man-of-war to present their little account, but when, by their labor, the crofters could make something more than they needed for their bare existence, the surplus or a part of it was claimed by and paid to the 'landlords.' The letter which you publish states not only that the crofters are 'the most Christian,' but also that they are 'the most loyal people in Her Majesty's dominions.' From this we may suppose that the crofters have always paid 'Scot and lot' and borne their share of the expense of Government. Now comes a succession of bad harvests and the yielding power of the Island of Skye is for a time reduced so that it can perhaps barely support its toiling inhabitants. The landlords, however, have been accustomed, more or less regularly, to receive the rents which they imposed, and now that there is not any surplus with which they are to be paid, we are asked to help to provide for the people, not that they may toil to live, but that they may toil to pay rent. Were the country in so poor a condition that the inhabitants could not exist, then I am sure Canadian crofters, but so long as one pound of rent is paid to the rich Scotch landlords, we shall not be subscribing to the crofters, but to the 'landlords.' Under existing land laws we cannot blame the landlords for trying to collect their rent, but we have not any special interest in paying it. I think that it may be taken as axiomatic that so long as these unfortunate crofters are tenants under existing land laws, we may be able to pity them, or invite them to cultivate our barren lands but we cannot help them to live in Skye. Were we to provide every crofter family with 'meals at all hours,' served by gentlemanly waiters free of charge, the only result would be that Skye would be so pleasant and easy a place to live in that the 'landlords' would put up the rent.

ELECTIVE GRAND JURIES.

One evening contemporary, the Daily Star, does not approve of Mr. Parnell's proposal to make the Irish grand juries elective. Mr. Parnell in a speech at Clonmel referred to the unrepresentative character of the grand juries as at present constituted, and said that their powers must go to elected bodies who shall represent the ratepayers. This declaration of the Irish leader has caused the Daily Star to feel uneasy; but its uneasiness springs from pure ignorance of the question at issue. It says:—

"It is to be feared that an elective grand jury would be as unsatisfactory as an elective judiciary. On the whole grand juries do not need reforming so much as the petty juries, the duties of which are if anything even more important."

This six-line paragraph shows a rather dense ignorance of Irish affairs on the part of our twinking confrere. The error the Daily Star falls into is in assuming the grand jury which rules over the Irish people to be a body similar to our Canadian grand jury which is called together at every criminal term to find "true bills" or no bills as the case may be, and to visit the jail and government asylums to report their condition. The Irish grand jury is an administrative body, with almost unlimited powers over the local affairs of a county while the Canadian grand jury is purely a judicial body with very limited powers over the criminal calendar; so that the difference between the Irish and Canadian grand juries is as great as that between our local Legislature and our grand juries. Besides, the Irish grand jury is a species of oligarchy; it is a body composed of men antagonistic to the popular interests, and who are selected for that very reason by the Deputy Lieutenant of the county. They are given complete control over public affairs, and the ratepayers have not a word to say in their administration or their selection for office. And still the Daily Star is shocked at Mr. Parnell demanding a reform in this offensive and tyrannical method of ruling a people. Our contemporary evidently did not know what it was talking about. It was badly posted.

THE DEMOCRATIC WAVE IN ENGLAND.

The Democratic element is rapidly coming to the front in aristocratic England. Sir Charles Dilke and Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, who are at present the recognized leaders of the democracy, will be strengthened by the addition of Professor Stuart to their party. He is the newly elected successor in Parliament of the late Postmaster-General Fawcett. In a speech delivered at Bolton, near Manchester, Professor Stuart advocated the abolition of the law of entail, the easy transfer of land, and compensation for disturbance in the case of improvements on the conclusion of short leases. This is pretty much the whole doctrine of the Land League, which was scouted out of the British Parliament three years ago. Professor Stuart demands that education should be free throughout the kingdom, the cost to be met from the funds of the disestablished Church of Scotland, which he considered to be near at hand, and also of the disestablished Church of England. He also advocated a radical pro-

form in the constitution regarding the House of Lords, which could not exist, as at present constituted, beyond another great crisis. This speech has startled the Tories and annoys the moneyed Whigs, who are quick in denouncing it as revolutionary. It was, however, received with great enthusiasm by the large concourse which listened to it. A mass meeting of the people of London, held in front of the Royal Exchange on Saturday, has improved on this declaration. A resolution was passed declaring that the "depression in trade, chronic poverty and difficulty of finding work are intolerable, and that those who suffer therefrom ought not tamely to endure these evils resulting from a denial of the equal rights of man in the elements which the Creator has provided." The meeting pledged itself to demand restitution to the whole people of their birthright in the land. There is evidently no easy time in store for British legislators. If they do not keep a careful lookout their domestic affairs will give them infinitely more trouble and anxiety than the most complicated of their foreign policies.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INSOLVENCY QUESTION.

The present state of the law in the Dominion in relation to bankruptcy and insolvency is most unsatisfactory and is calculated to work serious injury to the business interests of the country. Insolvency is a difficult subject to regulate and legislate upon, but the difficulties which surround a question should not prevent Parliament or the Government from doing their duty in regard to it. The Insolvent Act of 1875 was open to grave objections, and it was its manifest imperfection that caused the House to abrogate it in 1880; but the business men of the country, represented by the several Boards of Trade throughout the Provinces, expected the Government to find and adopt a substitute which would be more acceptable to the community. The Government, however, have done nothing in the matter. A policy of procrastination and evasion has been followed, and at present there is no Insolvency law whatever. There is no check, no safeguard whatever against trickery, rascality and positive injustice. A trader can continue business to the very last minute, long after he is aware that he is hopelessly insolvent, and just as the crash becomes imminent, he can assign to some irresponsible friend, who will have no scruple in letting the insolvent manipulate the estate to further his own designs, to prefer the claims of chosen creditors and let the others whistle for their pay. A fair distribution under such circumstances is absolutely out of the question. This state of affairs is paralyzing to trade and cannot but operate adversely to our business interests. Delegation after delegation from the Canadian Boards of Trade, and even foreign merchants have approached members of the Dominion Government and implored them to make a move in the matter and to take some measure which would render the chances of creditors fair and even.

Profiting by the presence of the leader of the Government in town yesterday, the members of the council of the Montreal Board of Trade waited upon Sir John A. Macdonald to urge upon him the pressing necessity of affording some sort of relief and protection to the commercial situation by passing an Insolvent Act in the coming Session of Parliament. The chairman of the delegation, Mr. J. P. Cleghorn, explained that a bill for the equitable distribution of the estates of insolvent traders of the Dominion, applicable to the whole Dominion, had been carefully prepared and entrusted to the hands of Mr. J. J. Curran, member for Montreal Centre. That bill was the joint production of the boards of trade of Toronto, Hamilton and Montreal, and had also been endorsed by the Winnipeg board. They had approached the Premier for the adoption of that measure—The Curran Bill—in the belief that unless it had the sanction and support of the Government there would be no chance of its passage, and as a result no relief to the trade of the country. They asked this sanction and support as a matter of justice, for trade and commerce would undoubtedly be largely benefited by the enactment of the law in question.

Sir John Macdonald in his reply to the delegation, was exceedingly non-committal and indefinite. He said the question had received the consideration of the government, but what might be finally done he could not say until Parliament met. This would seem to indicate that Parliament is more independent on certain questions than on others, or that when Sir John is unwilling to act, so is the majority of the House. The Premier gave expression to a doctrine which does not suggest a very disinterested motive, or a very elevated idea of the duty and responsibility of a watchful government, when he said that "the only object of making a particular bill a government measure 'was that the government had power to press it on the attention of the House.'"

According to this, no government should introduce or father any wise and beneficial measures, if there was a possibility of not commanding a majority in the division. Sir John would then make the maintenance of itself in power the first object and aim of a government. This is a very false view to take of the duty of a government. The first object of a government should be to sanction and support honestly and fearlessly all needed and wise legislation. The country's benefit and not their own temporary security should be the motive of all governmental action. If the opposite principle is admitted and put in practice, nothing but legislative abuses and grievances will crop up and old ones become more firmly established. Sir John also gave as another reason for not taking up the insolvency question, that "government were merely the servants of parliament."

The government are more than that; they are the chief stewards of the people, and it is to the people that they ultimately look for an approval of their conduct, and, when occasion arises, for an endorsement against an adverse verdict of parliament.

The only hope that the Premier held out was that the subject would be discussed in parliament at the approaching session. What that discussion will result in is not difficult to anticipate. In the meantime the system of voluntary assignments and power of preference will go on increasing, leaving creditors at the mercy of every dishonest insolvent in the country.

INDEPENDENCE DISCUSSED AT THE BANQUET.

In point of numbers and of enthusiasm the banquet tendered last evening to Sir John A. Macdonald, as the culminating expression of Conservative attachment and admiration for their leader was, without doubt, a brilliant success. The banquet hall could hold no more and the banqueters could manifest no more exuberant jubilation and delight than characterized the proceedings of last night. The intellectual portion of the bill was scarcely up to the standard, in fact, the great majority of the speeches were rather light. There were no weighty utterances, except in a few instances, although the speakers were the shining lights of the party and the prominent statesmen of the country, both Federal and Provincial. The eloquence of the night seemed to have resolved itself into one continued stream of adulation and one perpetual vow of devotion to the honored guest of the occasion. No new questions of policy were introduced, no principles were discussed. It was the old abuse of political opponents, and absent ones at that.

The most conspicuous sinner in that respect was Sir John A. Macdonald himself. His personal attack on Sir Richard Cartwright was as ill-advised as it was bitter. Many of the Premier's admirers and friends regretted the exhibition, and it is noteworthy that the denunciations of Sir Richard's character was received in almost perfect silence. Sir Leonard Tilley was more judicious and dealt with the ex-Minister of Finance's policy and especially his recent speech regarding the condition of Canada, delivered a few weeks ago in the Queen's Hall. Sir Leonard indignantly denied that there was any foundation for what he termed the defamatory statements of Sir Richard against the good name and credit of the country. To many present his arguments proving the falsity of Sir Richard's position were not very clear or conclusive. The only other point of importance touched upon was the question of the Independence of Canada. It was broached by Sir John. The Premier once more declared his firm conviction that the position of a colony was a good enough one for Canada to hold for all time to come. He declared emphatically against National Independence, and gave some very weak reasons for so doing. On this score Sir John did not have his audience entirely and enthusiastically with him. The applause, what there was of it that greeted his anti-national declaration, was quite conventional. It was felt that the Premier, after kneeling at the feet of Her Majesty but a few weeks ago to receive an additional knightly honor, could not well put up a bulletin that would indicate the true beating of the national pulse. To play out his part in full, Sir John of course had to abuse those Canadians who deem their country worthy not only of knighthood, but of nationhood.

The only other speakers who had the inclination or perhaps the courage to touch upon the question of independence were Mr. B. D. McGibbon and the Hon. J. A. Chapleau, fit representatives of Young Canada and its aspirations. The former discussed it as an open question and one not to be arbitrarily settled at the dictation of any one man. In proposing the toast of the Army, Navy and Volunteers, Mr. McGibbon said: "Let me say, however, that no matter what our views may be as to the future of our country, 'whether we expect and hope to see 'the connection with the mother land main- 'tained unbroken, or whether the political 'horoscope seems to reveal to us severance, 'more or less complete, of those ties which 'now bind us to Great Britain so long as we 'remain subjects of the Crown, so long, at 'least, must the fortunes of the army and 'navy be regarded with loyal and affection- 'ate interest by all true Canadians. (Ap- 'plause.)"

The Hon. J. A. Chapleau, who met with an ovation which was not even eclipsed by that accorded to the Premier, dealt with the question of the future of this country in an open manner. His speech, which was the effort of the evening, was listened to throughout with rapt attention. But perhaps the most eloquent passage of the speech was when the Secretary of State in a passionate outburst, exclaimed that "Whether we will it or whether we will it not, the time must come when the development, the progress and the importance of this country will make it superior to all outside considerations, and will force it to its ultimate destiny." Sir John looked very solemn at this declaration, but the gathering cheered it to the echo.

Considering the men and their associations with the general surroundings and tone of the occasion, it would not have been surprising to have heard the sentiment of national independence soundly hissed and squelched, but such was not the case. On the contrary, its condemnation by Sir John A. Macdonald was received in respectful but significant silence, while a hint at its possible realization was sufficient to draw forth the plaudits of a large section of the gathering.

MR. BLAKE'S POLITICAL PLATFORM.

The one great weakness of the Liberal party in the Dominion, up to the present, has been its lack of a definite and positive political platform. Hon. Edward Blake, whose honesty and ability as a statesman are unquestioned, has come before the people with a declaration of principles, which he submits to them for careful consideration and impartial judgment. Mr. Blake's address to the Young Liberals of Toronto on the same evening that Sir John delivered his humorous and anti-national speech to the young Conservatives of Montreal, was admittedly a magnificent effort, eloquent in tone, fair in criticism, wise in appreciation, and eminently patriotic in sentiment.

The platform enunciated by Mr. Blake breathes the genuine spirit of Young Canada, and combines in a large measure the aspirations of those who favor the national sovereignty of their country. The three distinguishing planks of that platform are: First, the power to revise our own constitution without any reference to Downing street; secondly, the right to make our own commercial treaties without the permission or interference of Imperial nincompoops, and finally, an elective Senate, which will represent and be responsible to the people and not to the First Minister of the day. The Toronto Mail says that Mr. Blake has disappointed his party in presenting a platform which is but a "lot of old planks, some of which mean nothing, and nearly all of which have been condemned by the people." The Mail is scarcely serious, but its utterance is proof of the blindness and unfairness with which a party organ considers itself bound to deal with the programme of its opponents. The planks which we have enumerated above are by no means old; the Confederation is quite young and they can not be a bit older. Our nominative Senate has just had about sufficient time to be tried, and it has been found a complete failure. The want of power to make treaties has of late been more severely felt by the country than when it was in its struggling infancy. The right to revise the constitution would be a progressive step towards independence. As must be plain to all, none of those planks are very old, and the Mail's objection to them on the score of antiquity is not very sound or serious. They have never been placed before the country for approval or disapproval, but that fact does not prevent the Tory organ from jubilantly exclaiming that they have nearly all been condemned by the people.

The question that gives the Mail the most uneasiness is the one relating to the treaty-making power. It points out that as a colony we cannot enter into negotiations with a foreign country, and that to make a treaty of our own accord for our especial benefit, without consulting England, would be to assume our independence.

Precisely! That is what the country is preparing to do. Sir John tells us we are the freest people on earth, and that we cannot have any more independence than we possess; but here, in regard to a fundamental right, and a first function of a free government and people, we find ourselves in an absolute state of political servitude.

"The treaty-making power," says the Mail, "is the first attribute of an independent state and cannot be assumed by a colony unless the intention is to break from the parent nation forthwith." That is the intention of the present, and we have no doubt will be the realization of the near future.

It is a point of extreme importance that our foreign markets should be enlarged. There can be no question about that. At present the markets seem to be narrowing rather than enlarging, owing to our apostrengthening-connection. As Mr. Blake pointed out, business affairs are best managed by those who know most and best about the business. "The commercial and fiscal policy of England differs widely from ours; their lives are different, their views are different. It is necessary only to look to their public despatches upon analogous questions to observe. We have found it stated in parliament that we just missed a most advantageous convention with France by twenty hours, because our then Agent-General at Paris had to refer it to the Foreign Office in London. Before the answer came the happy moment was lost, and the treaty was lost, too. That has been stated by the First Minister at Ottawa, yet he says it would be a great harm for Canada to have power to negotiate treaties direct. In that case it would not have been largely. It has been said to me, 'How do you expect you will be able to enforce your treaties by war unless you negotiate it through the medium of the British ambassador? Well, I never should propose to enforce a commercial treaty that way. I am rather a man of peace myself, at any rate, but the idea of insisting that if a commercial convention is broken you will go to war about it, seems to me perfectly absurd. It is said that we are too small to engage in commercial treaties advantageously. It depends upon the advantages of a treaty whether we will negotiate it or not. It does not depend upon our size, which is respectable, our numbers which are considerable, or our trade which is not to be despised, but upon the question whether the other party thinks it is a good bargain to enter into or not. It seems to me the arguments against our position are entirely fallacious, and that common sense and experience alike indicate that a step in advance would be taken if Canada had the power to make her own commercial treaties."

This declaration by Mr. Blake will meet with almost unanimous endorsement from the Canadian people, whose interest it is that Canada should take her proper position among treaty-making nations. The Montreal Herald says it would like to see Mr. Blake "take even a bolder attitude than he does" on this important question, and would have been