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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CURRENT TOPICS	963
MR. GOLDWIN SMITH AND CANADIAN LITERATURE	964
THE RULE OF DEMOCRACY	965
MR. GLADSTONE ON HERESY AND SCHISM	966
MONTREAL LETTER	967
SIX SHIPS (POEM)	968
WAR IN COREA	968
THE GERMANS AS PSYCHOLOGISTS	968
GLIMPSES AT THINGS	970
PARIS LETTER	971
TWO HISTORY-MAKERS	971
A JULY HOLIDAY WITH BLISS CARMAN	973
CORRESPONDENCE—	
“What is the Matter With Canadian Literature?”	974
SHAKESPEARE—(Prof. William Clark, M.A., LL.D.; Prof. J. Clark Murray, M.A.)	974
A Residential Hall	975
A MILKING SONG (POEM)	975
ART NOTES	976
MUSIC AND THE DRAMA	976
LIBRARY TABLE	976
PERIODICALS	977
LIBRARY AND PERSONAL	977
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE	978
PUBLIC OPINION	980
SCIENTIFIC AND SANITARY	981
MISCELLANEOUS	982
QUIPS AND CRANKS	983

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CURRENT TOPICS.

The orators and press of the Dominion Opposition are inquiring anxiously, and not unreasonably, what the Dominion Government is going to do about the stupendous Curran Bridge frauds. It cannot be that the Government will attempt to satisfy public indignation by the dismissal of a couple of the minor culprits, while allowing the principal offenders to go unwhipt of justice. While it is right that all who were in any way connected with or cognizant of the affair should be punished, it is tenfold more imperative for the sake of justice, for the vindication of the good name of Canada, and for the prevention of such frauds in the future, that the chief organizers and managers of the conspiracy, those into whose pockets the money filched from the public chest has gone, should be not only dismissed

from all connection with public affairs but prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Surely there can be no great difficulty in determining who these guilty ones are, or in bringing home to them their guilt before a judicial tribunal. Nor is this all that is, or ought to be, necessary in order to satisfy the outraged sentiment of the people. It is incredible that frauds so bold and upon so large a scale could have taken place had the business of the department been properly managed and the rigid oversight which the public have a right to expect been exercised. Somebody in officialdom must have been either very stupidly or very conveniently blind. Where is the flaw in the official methods? Who is the culprit in the departmental ranks? The Canadian people must be not only long-suffering but easy-going beyond all peoples under the sun, if they do not insist that something effective shall be done, some thorough purgation wrought, as a pledge of better things in the future, before they allow this disgraceful affair, with its heavy robbery of their hard-earned funds, to pass into the limbo of forgetfulness.

The proposal to connect the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean by means of artificial water-ways of such depth and magnitude that large ocean-going steamships may pass, with their cargoes, from the Atlantic to the very heart of the great North American continent, and return laden with the grain of the western prairies, seems at first thought a wild dream of some hare-brained enthusiast. But the people who live in these days of transcontinental railways and Suez and Manchester canals have learned to be not in haste in denouncing any proposed enterprise simply because of its magnitude. Everyone who gives a little attention to the matter must admit that such an enlargement of the existing canals, themselves almost world-wonders in their earlier days, is not only theoretically possible, but is after all but a question of money and labor, and engineering skill, and thus resolves itself into one of advantages to be gained, in other words, of inducements offered. It is well that a convention of those on both sides of the line who are so far interested in this stupendous project as to be disposed to inquire into its feasibility, is to be held in this city at an early date. It is to be hoped that a large number of thoroughly representative men, men of large business ability, and men of demonstrated scientific knowledge and skill, may come together and discuss the whole project

calmly and as thoroughly as may be, and that good reports of the proceedings be circulated as widely as possible.

It is, of course, obvious that there are a good many questions to be asked, before committing ourselves to any such project, besides those pertaining merely to its feasibility from the engineering and financial points of view. Is it clear that commerce would flow freely and without interruption along the new channel, after it had been opened up at enormous cost? Would the saving in the expense of carrying effected by the change be so large as to insure the ready use of the new water-way? Would the owners of the great ocean carriers find it to their advantage to add to the length of time consumed in the ocean voyages the days necessary for traversing the slow length of the canals? Thus it will be seen that the views of experts in ocean freighting will be as necessary in the consultation as those of merchant princes and railway experts. To our mind the proposed international character of the project, to which some seem disposed to take exception, is one of its greatest recommendations. The thing would be a fine example of international common-sense and goodwill. The joint construction and use of such a marvel of engineering skill and western energy would, in itself, afford no slight pledge of continued peace and goodwill between the Canadian people and their Republican neighbors. But that the two peoples should be able to work together harmoniously and heartily in the construction and management of such a mutual undertaking seems to us, we confess, almost too much to hope for.

There is, probably, no part of the Dominion on which the “National Policy” has pressed so heavily as on the Prairie Province and the Territories. From no other quarter were the protests so loud and emphatic a year or two ago. It was not wonderful, therefore, that the people of Winnipeg and its vicinity came out in immense and enthusiastic crowds to listen to the gospel of free trade proclaimed by the eloquent leader of the Opposition. A crucial question, in regard to which there has been much difference of opinion since the close of the Parliamentary session, is whether and to what extent the few tariff reductions made in the revision of the tariff have satisfied the supporters of the Government who were previously on the eve of revolt in the North-West. Some of these declare that the tariff agitation in that sec-