

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The people in the Provinces down by the sea have watched with curiosity the progress of the Riel agitation, and have with a few exceptions, arrived at the conclusion that the movement was of a political, rather than of a mere national or race character. So far as the execution of Riel is concerned, they have no reason to condemn the Government, but they have good reason to demand a searching investigation as to the causes of the Metis rebellion, and to hold the Government responsible for any sins of omission or commission of which it may be proved guilty. That the Half-breeds had grievances has been tacitly admitted upon all sides, but that the grievances as set forth by Riel in his so-called Bill of Rights were such as the Government could not entertain, cannot for a moment be allowed. As set forth by the Half-breed leaders, these grievances were:—Delay in issuing patents for their lands, refusal to depart from the system of survey which prevailed everywhere else in the Territories, to meet their peculiar views and circumstances; failure of the authorities and others to give them as large a share as they thought they were entitled to in contracts of various kinds; delay in settling their claims to receive grants and to set aside reserves for the maintenance of schools and other institutions to be managed by their clergy.

Louis Riel claimed for the Metis one-seventh of all the lands in the North-West, or to that proportion of the proceeds to be derived from their sale. This, in view of the fact that Canada had twice paid for these lands, first to the Hudson's Bay Co., and secondly to the Indians, was a proposal which no Government had any warrant for entertaining. The fact is, the Metis claimed all the privileges and immunities of their Indian cousins, and at the same time demanded to be treated as white settlers. Their dual position was in a great measure the cause of the delays so bitterly complained of by them; and if the Government's failure to acknowledge the Metis as both white settlers and Indian wards was the sole cause for the North-West rebellion, our people will be prepared to weigh the facts and place the responsibility of the outbreak upon the shoulders of those by whom it was brought about. As leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Edward Blake should probe this matter to the bottom, ascertain the facts in connection with it, and present his verdict of guilty or not guilty, according to the evidence adduced, even though that evidence should prove the Government to have done the best under the circumstances.

WHY DON'T WE SELL OUR SEA-FISH IN ONTARIO?

A New Brunswick commercial writer says that the reason why the trade in fish between the Maritime Provinces and Ontario and Quebec is not growing, is that we lack the means of cheap and speedy transit. The freight trains travel so very slowly that merchants are averse to using them for distant markets; and the charges for express trains are said to be so high that the cost of sending a car-load of fish from St. John, N. B., to Toronto is more than the first value of the fish. It is contended that Boston and Portland, owing largely to injudicious railway management, are now supplying with fish of every kind the markets in our Upper Provinces, which ought to be supplied more cheaply by the fish dealers of the Maritime Provinces. That the trade of the places down by the sea should thus be handicapped, is a circumstance to be regretted. Now that attention has been called to it, we hope our representatives at Ottawa will speedily effect such changes in the management of our Intercolonial road that such restrictions on intercolonial trade will be removed, and will not be allowed to recur hereafter. The markets for sea-fish in Ontario and Quebec are fair, steady, and well worth having, and should naturally be in our hands, not in the itching palm of avaricious Uncle Sam. We in the Maritime Provinces have surely weight enough in the councils of the country to secure these markets. If not, we need some new blood in the Commons and Senate of Canada.

THE LABOR QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

What the land question has long been to the peasantry of Ireland, the labor question is fast becoming to the toiling masses of the United States. In the case of the Irish people, indeed, the question has more than once been one of starvation or exile, and so may practically be considered to have been one of life or death. An alternative so inhumanly awful is not, it is true, presented to the laboring classes of the great American Republic; but their present and impending condition is unsatisfactory enough to call for thought and comment.

In the country south of us, we have of late years witnessed workmen's strikes of enormous magnitude, and most calamitous in their effects. We have seen great mines closed down, and in some instances flooded by "strikers"; we have seen long-continued suspension of work in great mills, factories, and workshops; and through all this, thousands and tens of thousands of men have been idle for months, and not unfrequently their families in consequence have been rescued from the brink of starvation only by the generosity of the charitable. The accounts given in the press of the suffering in Ohio and Pennsylvania during the recent strikes there, probably give no adequate idea of the widespread and awful distress which then prevailed in the mining districts of these two States.

The startling figures lately published by representatives of the Knights of Labor, which is a powerful and widely extended organization of laborers, tell us that the unemployed in the United States are to be numbered by tens of thousands. They seem almost incredible when read in view of the apparent activity of trade, and the fair share of prosperity that the country seems to be enjoying. They are certainly sufficiently alarming to excite deep concern in the mind of the thoughtful and reflective observer.

Observing men must needs notice that something is wrong in the prevailing conditions of the labor element in several of the United States, and in the present relations of labor and capital. Communism, the secret enemy of modern civilization, begins to rear its unscrupulous head—the sure harbinger of social disruption and political revolution.

THE FRENCH CROWN JEWELS.

The approaching sale of the crown jewels of France, naturally calls attention to that most simple, as well as perfect and beautiful form of matter, the diamond. The gems which are to be sold will, it is estimated, bring \$40,000,000, which will be converted into a fund for aged workmen. The famous Pitt, or Regent, diamond valued at \$1,000,000 will not be sold; nor will a large number of others, of artistic or historical interest, valued at \$2,600,000. Many of the most valuable diamonds have a career,—some of them an adventurous one. The Orloff diamond, purchased for Catherine II of Russia, had been stolen from the eye of an Indian idol by a French deserter at Pondicherry. The Regent diamond was obtained from a slave who had purloined it from a mine, by carrying it in a wound which he made for the purpose in one of his legs. After the process of cutting, which lasted two years, this purest of diamonds was bought by the regent Duke of Orleans in 1718 for \$675,000. The kings of France wore it in their crowns, until Napoleon placed it on the hilt of his sword. Thus it came to be captured by the Prussians at Waterloo, and restored on the re-instatement of the Bourbons.

The monarchs of France shewed their national weakness for display in their passion for valuable gems. Between the years 1476 and 1774, the number of diamonds enumerated among the crown jewels was 7,482. During the reign of Louis XV. it became fashionable at court to wear costumes, buttons, and sword hilts sparkling with gems. It is little wonder that the starving peasantry of France were maddened at the sight of wealth beyond their powers of comprehension, idly sparkling on the sword-hilt of some passing courtier! Whatever we may think of the socialist's envy of his wealthy neighbor, we cannot withhold our sympathy from these oppressed wretches who paid a tax on the very salt which they consumed, while the luxurious nobility enjoyed immunity from public burdens. Napoleon I. bought up all the crown jewels that his agents could trace, and soon brought together 37,393 precious stones. The selling of these jewels, and the appropriation of their value to the benefitting of the poor, is but a restoration of wealth to the descendants of its former rightful owners.

In his speech at Mandalay, Lord Dufferin told his Burmese hearers that it was the intention of the British Government to unite Upper and Lower Burmah under one government. For the present, General Prendergast and the 18,000 troops under his command would continue to enforce order, but he felt confident that in the course of a few months a strong civil government similar to those of Madras and Bombay could be formed. The chief positions would be occupied by Britains, while all the minor posts were to be filled by Burmese officials.

The Toronto Chamber of Commerce has been discussing the improvement of St. Lawrence navigation. The Lachine and Welland canals have been enlarged at a considerable cost, but there are canals between them, at Beauharnois, Cornwall, and Williamsburg, which are so shallow that vessels carrying more than 17,000 bushels of grain cannot proceed down the river farther than Kingston. The trans-shipment thus rendered necessary gives an advantage to the American ports Oswego and Ogdensburg. That the Montreal route is seriously affected thereby may be seen from the fact that the tonnage of American vessels passing through the Welland canal for American ports increased during the last four years from 47,000 tons to 104,537, whilst that of American vessels bound for Montreal fell from 332,000 to 142,000 tons.

The prospect of the settlement of the Fisheries Question is far from encouraging. The President and Senate, who evidently are anxious to settle the difficulty, have not the power to frame a treaty which affects the United States revenue without the consent of a majority of the members in the House of Representatives. In the latter House the members are too busily engaged in furthering their own private interests, and in securing, in view of their re-election, large appropriations to their respective constituencies, to take the necessary time and trouble to investigate the merits of the Fisheries Question. Under these circumstances we have nothing to do but to protect our inshore fishing grounds, and the Government of the Dominion is evidently fully convinced that this is the only course to pursue.

Mr. Moody has among the evangelists of the United States one contemporary who, like himself, has the faculty of impressing the masses. Sam Jones, the great revivalist, is now at work in Chicago, and his converts are daily increasing by scores. Not long since, addressing an immense audience in Chicago, he suddenly stopped, and after a pause, in which perfect silence prevailed, he requested that all those present who had before leaving their homes knelt down and offered up prayer should stand up. Of the 8,000 present but 11 persons stood up; whereupon the evangelist leaned against a pillar as if for support, his countenance assumed an expression of the deepest agony, when suddenly resuming his standing position he cried out: "All those who believe in prayer, stand up." Not a person in the crowded hall remained sitting, and Sam Jones, having thus riveted the attention of his hearers, led off in one of those bursts of song which at once thrill and delight audiences of the character described.