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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Aug. 28th, 1875.

THE NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS.

Another phase has been reached in this important and perplexed question. It is in the shape of a compromise which gives hope of amicable settlement in the near future. After the failure of the case, on political grounds, in the Dominion Parliament, the Roman Catholic members of the Provincial Legislature resolved upon making a final effort to solve the problem with their own Provincial Government. With this view, and under the sanction of Bishop SWEENEY, they submitted a series of propositions to the cabinet of New Brunswick. These propositions are four in number and we shall summarize them as follows:

I.

That the pupils residing in all populous places where there may be a sufficient number of children to form two or more schools, shall be permitted to attend schools outside of the districts in which they may reside.

To this the reply of the Government is simple and satisfactory. After laying down the principle that the power to admit to the schools of a district children residing in another district is vested in the Trustees, they allow that in the case of districts where there are two or more schools, the Trustees may, subject to proper provision for grading, allow children from any part of the district to attend any of the schools within the bounds of the district.

II.

That regulation be made to provide for the granting of licenses to persons holding certificates from the Superior of any religious Order, or where such persons hold no such certificates, that provision be made for the examination of such persons at their place of residence or school-rooms.

To this proposition the reply is that any person who has undergone training at a recognized or Normal School in another country, or who holds a diploma from a chartered College or University, is eligible for examination for license. The certificate of the Superior of any of the Roman Catholic teaching Orders is recognized as rendering the holder eligible for such examination, and it would not be necessary for such persons to attend the New Brunswick Training School. When such certificates are not held, attendance upon the Training School is required.

III.

That in schools taught by the Christian Brothers and Sisters of Charity, or which may be attended by Roman Catholic children, the teachers shall not be compelled to use any books which may contain anything objectionable to them in a religious point of view (referring now more particularly to the History and Readers prescribed by the Board of Education.)

We regard the reply of the Executive Council to this proposition as courteous and conciliatory. They affirm that the greatest care has been taken to keep the school books free from matter objectiona-

ble to any one on religious grounds, and it will continue to be the aim of the educational authorities to render the text books suitable to all. In reference to the prescribed History of England, the Council are prepared to recommend to the favourable consideration of the Board of Education the adoption and insertion of notes, compiled from Lingard, upon such portions of the text as may be deemed objectionable in a religious point of view, when presented to the Board on behalf of the Roman Catholic minority.

IV.

That provision shall be made that the Trustees shall allow religious instruction to be given in the school rooms under their control after regular secular school hours, said hours to be shortened to the extent allowed for religious instruction.

Here lies the knot of the whole question. The other propositions related rather to matters of detail. This turns on a point of vital substance. The reply is a guarded negative, but so diplomatically worded as to leave room for future negotiation which, we trust, will be pursued until a fair understanding is arrived at. The Council regard it as obvious that if the Trustees be required to allow the teachers to give denominational instruction after school to the pupils assembled for public purposes under the authority of the School Act, the direct tendency of such a provision would be to render the selection and appointment of teachers a matter to be determined rather by their denominational views than their fitness to discharge the specified duties required of them during school hours.

We shall not enter upon a discussion of these documents to-day. They are a great step in advance, and read in connection with Archbishop LYNCH's late utterance on the same subject, must be regarded as very significant. The principal journals of St. John and the Province of New Brunswick appear favorable to some such scheme of compromise.

THE ENGLISH SHIPPING ACT.

In our comments last week on the Merchants' Shipping Act passed by the British Government, under the direction of Sir CHARLES ADDERLEY, we went rather fully into its merits, and, among other remarks, we stated that Mr. PLIMSOLL's proposals for a compulsory classification and a regulated load line would, if carried, drive the shipping trade of England into the hands of the foreign owner and ruin the greatest commercial interest of the country. This statement is so true on the very face of it that we wonder none of our contemporaries have noticed it. The subject, however, has attracted attention in another respect, that of its effects upon the shipping trade of the port of Montreal. Mr. HENRY FRY, of Quebec, has written a letter to the *Gazette*, of this city, taking this view of it, and certainly a gentleman of Mr. FRY's standing and experience, is entitled to a hearing. He adverts to the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer accepted an amendment of Mr. REED's, "prohibiting the carriage, in British ships, of grain in bulk," with an addition, "which limited the prohibition to cases in which more than one-third of the cargo consisted of grain," and another amendment was afterwards accepted "providing that a British ship, carrying more than one-third of a grain cargo in bulk, should not be deemed seaworthy;" and, in the debate of the 5th of August, another amendment was carried providing "that the clause should not apply to any grain shippers before the 1st of October, 1875." Making at once the application to the port of Montreal, Mr. FRY urges that unless a large supply of grain bags are procured during September it will be practically impossible to ship grain from Montreal in British ships after the 1st October next. He regards it further as evident that the Bill will act with tremendous force against British shipowners, throw the bulk of the British grain-carrying trade into the hands of foreigners, and tell against Montreal and in favor of New

York, where a large proportion of the carrying trade is done by Germans, Norwegians, and Italians, who will thus be in a position to carry grain at a cheaper rate than British ships.

We quite agree with Mr. FRY that this is a matter well worth the attention of our Government, and especially of the Minister of Marine. The dramatic turn of the PLIMSOLL incident has naturally of itself made a great impression on the continent, and it is clear from the tone of the French papers that shipowners in France stand ready to avail themselves of the unexpected advantages thus thrown in their way. We do not exactly agree with Mr. FRY that this legislation is the product of an "unreasoning panic," but there is no doubt that the Government Bill was hastily drawn up, immaturely considered, rapidly passed through its different stages in Parliament, and officially pronounced to be only a temporary measure. Even in the Speech from the Throne the hope is expressed that no harm will result from it during the months intervening before the next session of Parliament, when a more thorough and satisfactory treatment of the case is promised.

With regard to ourselves, it will be remembered that there is a recent Act of the Canadian Parliament regulating the classification and loading of ships. That Act was passed with a clause empowering the Governor General in Council by Proclamation to bring it into force. Until now no such Proclamation has been issued and the Act has remained a dead letter. But we have no doubt that, in consideration of the urgency and extreme importance of the case, the Department of Marine and Fisheries will lose no time in making such legislation operative. While on the one hand, as we said last week, we need a PLIMSOLL among us to watch jealously over the interests of Canadian seamen and seafarers generally, we must look to the Government, on the other, for proper protection of our great shipping interest that so neither our shipowners nor our shippers shall suffer the penalties of abuses committed by their confreres in England and for which they are no wise responsible.

POSTAL UNION.

An announcement was lately made that our Government had secured admission into the convention by which the principal nations of Europe had agreed to reduce their Postal communications to the simplest and most amicable basis. This intelligence, coming almost simultaneously with the new Postal facilities entered upon with the United States, was received with general satisfaction. From our last English exchanges, especially the *Pall Mall Gazette*, we obtain full particulars of the scope and extent of this new international combination. The Postal Treaty, which came into operation on the 1st of July, was signed at Berne last October by the representatives of all the European Governments, of the United States, and of Egypt. France alone of the countries interested is excepted from its action up to the next year; to which time the special postal treaties concluded by the French Government with the various other Governments remain in force. Herr Stephan, the Prussian Postmaster-General, to whom was due the admirable organization of the Feld Post, both for letters and for postage-cards, during the late war, is said to have first brought forward the project of a universal postal system. But it might well have been suggested by the fixed charges, according to distance and the number of words, for telegraphic messages throughout the countries represented at the periodical Telegraphic Conferences; and the real originator of the main idea is clearly the late Sir Rowland Hill.

Sir ROWLAND HILL devised a uniform penny postage rate for the United Kingdom. The Postal Conference of Berne has introduced a uniform 2½d. or five sous or five cents postage rate in the new postal territory, which is several times as great as the vastest organized territory known to history. Twopence halfpenny is the Union charge for each prepaid let-

ter of not more than half an ounce in weight, with an additional charge of 2½d. for every additional half-ounce. In newspapers, books, or other parcels a tax is levied of ¾d. on every two ounces. A uniform rate, however, of 1d. may be fixed, according to the wish of each country, for every copy of a newspaper weighing not more than four ounces. Thus the charge on the largest English newspaper will not exceed 1d.; unless, indeed, it be sent more than 300 nautical miles by sea within the territory of the Union, in which case it becomes liable to an additional charge, not amounting to more than half the general Union rate. Not to vex Governments too much with vulgar fractions, it has been arranged that, to suit differences of exchange, the letter rate may be raised from 2½d. to 3d., or lowered to 2d.; and corresponding variations are allowed in connection with the rates payable on newspapers and books. The countries comprised in the new postal region are divided into "countries of origin," "countries of destination," and "intermediate countries." The "country of origin" keeps all the money received on prepaid letters. When a letter has not been prepaid the sum which becomes payable upon it is taken and kept by the "country of destination." The expense of sending "in transit through immediate countries closed mails as well as correspondence in open mails" is of course borne by the "country of origin," which is to be charged at the rate of 2 francs a kilogramme, or about 10d. a pound, for letters, and 25 centimes a kilogramme, or 1¼d. a pound, for newspapers. The expenses of sea service are to be diminished as much as possible; and a country providing ocean transit of more than 300 nautical miles may not claim from the "country of origin" more than 3 f. 75 c. for letters, or 1 f. 25 c. for newspapers. The treaty is for three years, and at the expiration of that time is to be regarded as binding in perpetuity, though any country may withdraw from it by giving a year's notice. Representatives of the countries included in the Postal Union are to assemble every three years in order to consider the working of the system and to remedy such defects in it as may have become apparent. When the official announcement will be made by our own Postal authorities it is to be hoped that the schedule of destinations and prices will be devised in a simple, scientific manner, so that all may understand it.

MINISTERS AT THE MANSION HOUSE.

Our last English papers bring us a report of that time honoured feast,—the annual dinner given by the Lord Mayor of London to the Ministers of the Queen. The Premier made a most elaborate review of the measures of the session from the point of view which he considered historic; and the set speeches of Mr. DISRAELI, whatever may be the estimate which men, from different stand points, may hold of his character, always contain food for reflection. He was careful to indicate in his opening remarks that his conclusions sprang rather from the autumn of experience than the spring time of anticipation. The topic to which he first alluded was the Colonial Empire of Great Britain. To consolidate this and keep it very near in sympathy and feeling to the heart of the parent state was, he said, an object of the greatest concern for Her Majesty's Government. He repudiated all such notions as that the Colonies were burdens to the Mother Country. On the contrary, he asserted they were her greatest glory. This expression of opinion was cheered; and it has not been, so far as we have seen, anywhere challenged by the press. In fact we may say that the views of those anti-colonial doctrinaires which found somewhat noisy expression a few years ago, are now silent; and this is a political sign of very great importance.

Turning to home matters, MR. DISRAELI said the present Ministers of the Queen