

who answers him, and all as honourably as possible; and the two come back and announce to their parents that really they are seriously thinking of getting married? And snow-shoeing, and its delight too—fastening a lady's 'shoe' (M. Mercier tried to describe a 'raquette' to the Parisians), but not quite too tightly, and so fastening it again, and perhaps many times; and then off in parties of hundreds even, with happiness and health. Is that a very dreary sort of winter? I am wearying you perhaps"—his audience was thoroughly delighted, and therefore protested against such a notion—"well, I agree with the lecturer, that in coming to us you will be doing a really patriotic work; you will be spreading abroad what good things France has to give the world; you will be joining with other races in establishing a great people, which will be French enough to claim from all America respect for French nationality." "Très-bien," said an old man at the close, "*il a beaucoup de cœur.*"

W. F. STOCKLEY.

### OTTAWA LETTER.

MR. THOMAS MCGREEVY is, in the language of the police, "wanted," but the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms could not find him in Quebec, though an unofficial visitor from Ottawa is said to have seen him there at that time. Before Colonel Smith could get back to report that his sword had not been drawn, Mr. McGreevy had sent in his resignation to the Speaker. But he had overlooked the little fact that a member cannot resign if his election is contested, and so Colonel Smith again went after him in vain. He will probably be expelled now without further ceremony; and it would be a very bitter partisan who would not be glad to be spared the sight of one of the oldest members of the House of Commons, a popular and respected one, too, in his time, brought to the Bar for sentence. His shame is heavy enough as it is, and his punishment may be made still severer if the law as to members sharing in contracts is enforced, as it may be at the instance of any informer. His counsel, Mr. Fitzpatrick, has done all that can be done for him, and really managed a plausible defence. But it is impossible to separate Mr. McGreevy, the Harbour Commissioner, from Mr. McGreevy, the Member of Parliament, in respect to the gravamen of the charges against him. Mr. Fitzpatrick had to admit it was no use denying that money had been taken from contractors for election purposes, and to remind the Committee that few of them were in a position to throw the first stone at his client.

Counsel for the Department of Public Works have put in their written arguments. It is said they follow Sir Hector's lead in making a scapegoat of Mr. Perley. Mr. Fitzpatrick, on the other hand, scouted the idea of corrupt motives on the part of Mr. Perley or the late Mr. Boyd, who was Resident Engineer of the Quebec Harbour works. Certainly it does seem unlikely that if a man could be corrupted and knew he could get thousands enough to make his future safe pecuniarily, he should risk ruin and disgrace for the sake of a little plate and jewellery.

Sir Hector Langevin's statements about the withdrawal of Mr. Starrs' tender for some public work was flatly contradicted by Mr. Starrs. Though this was merely an incident, it left an impression. But the Committee seeing that there must be an end to all things—even to Parliamentary investigations—closed down on further evidence. By the end of this week they ought to be pretty well advanced in the consideration of their report. They have accumulated fifteen hundred printed pages of evidence, of which it is safe to say two-thirds are irrelevant or unnecessary; and as for documents, plans and account books, there are boxes full of them. Theoretically the perusal of all this stuff will cause delay; practically there will be nothing to do so except the fear by one party or the other that some advantage may be gained or lost by going straight to the point. Next week, however, may see this long drawn out affair transferred from the Committee Room to the House, where it is sure to secure a hot debate.

The Tarte charges have of late lost nearly all interest compared with the doings at the other end of the building. Since last week the Senate Railway Committee has held several sittings, and Mr. Barwick has supplied missing links in his chain of evidence. Where not absolutely proved, as a Court of law would understand proof, irresistible inferences come in to bring home to Mr. Mercier and his *entourage* the worst that has been charged against them. But very little has been left to be "understood," as the old grammarians say. The facts are plain. The evidence of Mr. John J. Macdonald, a contractor who was negotiating with the Quebec Government about carrying on the railway before the new syndicate supplanted him, leaves no doubt at all about the position occupied by the redoubtable Mr. Pacaud towards that Government. Mr. Barwick has now closed his case, but the investigation has taken another turn, and the Committee will probably have to look into the application of the Dominion Subsidies by the Robitaille-Riopel directorate. To do them justice it must be said that the Committee have stated their readiness to go to the bottom of alleged Conservative misdoings as thoroughly as they have dealt with the charges against Mr. Mercier and his friends, and have called upon Mr. François Langelier, the Counsel for the Quebec Government, to make his accusations. These are denied in advance, and most flatly too, by the Honourable Mr. Robitaille, who by the way is not only a Senator but a member of the Committee.

One odd complication in these proceedings is that Mr. François Langelier was the Ontario Bank's counsel at one stage of them, and Mr. Cockburn, according to the reports, stated on oath that Mr. Langelier had advised him not to oppose the passage of the Bill, or bring forward the matter of the diversion of the subsidies from their proper use.

The latest "scandal" is a charge against Mr. Cochran, M.P. for East Northumberland, of trafficking in the patronage of his constituency. Mr. Malcom Cameron has taken the serious responsibility of making it from his seat in the House. It is to be hoped that there is some mistake, for this would be the worst of a series of blows at the credit of Canadian public men. It is to occupy a special Committee as a special case, the Privileges and Elections Committee, to which it should go as a matter of course, being so much occupied with the McGreevy-Langevin business.

Sir John Thompson in the Commons and the Premier in the Senate have spoken with no uncertain sound as to the determination of the Government to push to the utmost the investigations into the conduct of evil-doers, be they Ministers, members or civil servants. In the Public Accounts Committee last week a serious charge against Mr. Chapleau came out as an incident of the enquiry into the management of the Printing Bureau. It was hardly formulated, however, and was left to be inferred from the evidence. He and his colleagues present took the ground that it should be definitely made in the House, that the Committee should not go into evidence for the sake of finding whether the charge would lie. Sir Richard Cartwright brought up the question at once in the House in the form of a succinct resolution declaring the undoubted right of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate all circumstances connected with the payment of public moneys, and enouncing the principle that no evidence should be refused because it may disclose improper conduct of a Minister. To this the Minister of Justice fully assented, only deprecating fishing for evidence. The terms in which he spoke left nothing to be desired. There was an absolute disclaimer of any desire to hide behind technical objections as to the relevancy of evidence, and an assertion of determination to see any enquiry which the House had asked the Committee to undertake continued to the end no matter how fatal it might be to anyone. After that it does seem reasonable enough to ask that any charge made shall be made on the floor of the House, on the responsibility of the member making it, and then that it be referred to the Committee to hear any testimony bearing upon it.

Mr. Abbott's pronouncement was brought about by a question from Senator MacInnes, of Hamilton, as to the Government's intentions about reforming the Civil Service. The Senator was a member of the Civil Service Commission, whose report led to the establishment of the existing system, which however was only a step in the direction of the recommendations made in that report. Mr. Abbott announced the intention to appoint a Commission to investigate the whole system and to report some plan of conducting public business on the same lines as private business, and of securing the same efficiency and economy. He also stated that there was an idea of having an Inspector, independent of Government control or political considerations, as the Auditor-General is with respect to money matters. So much for the Civil Service. But Mr. Abbott evidently had more highly placed offenders in his mind, and left no uncertainty as to his intentions about them before he had done speaking.

Mr. Chapleau was rather sanguine when he said the other day that the commission system had not reached his department yet, and now the partisans of Sir Hector Langevin are rejoicing over the disclosures as to the doings of Messrs. Senecal and Bronskill, heads of the Printing and Stationery branches respectively. That is they were heads one morning, but by two in the afternoon Mr. Bronskill was dismissed and Mr. Senecal suspended, and he has since resigned. Both owned up to taking commissions on orders for supplies, their only defence being that it was understood that their business at all events was to be managed on "business principles," and "business principles" mean commissions. Bronskill was a comparatively small offender, measuring by money received, but Senecal had the purchasing of supplies, without tender, too, to the amount of \$50,000 or \$60,000 in a single transaction. His letter of resignation is an odd ignoring of any wrong doing and a cool depreciation of the misconception wrought by undue public excitement. There is a good deal in this, by the way, but nobody seems to think the general principle applies in this particular instance. That Mr. Senecal is a brother of "the Senecal" ought not really to raise any prejudice against either him or Mr. Chapleau, but it does, such is the suspiciousness of human nature, and the tendency to believe that history repeats itself. One immediate effect of the affair is to spoil Mr. Chapleau's chance of getting the Railways and Canals Department. The report is now that it will go to Mr. Tupper, at present Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

Mr. Amyot, the discoverer of "Bancroft," made that discovery the occasion of a want of confidence motion. There have already been plenty of these, so that the Session bids fair to rival a famous one in the Quebec Legislature when twenty-nine of them were moved in succession. Sir John Thompson's defence of the Government was masterly and will serve them in good stead in election times of trouble. There is nothing like a difficult case to bring out the abilities of a great lawyer.

Towards the end of last week the Estimates were

advanced a good bit, and many of them concurred in, a proceeding which usually indicates a move towards closing the Session, though in this instance it does not count for much. There was a good deal of political criticism of the Canal Estimates, which were ably handled by Mr. Bowell, and with uncommonly good temper. This may seem faint praise, but anybody who has watched a Minister "getting his Estimates through" will understand what it means, especially when the Estimates were not those of Mr. Bowell's own Department. To paraphrase a Gilbertian parody, the function of an Opposition as regards estimates is

To annoy the Ministers in the mode conventional,  
And find out sin where sin was unintentional.

X.

### ON LAKE ROSSEAU.

I.

"NO," Arthur Lewis was saying in the tone of a man who is accustomed to find his views at variance with those of most people, "I by no means think that all the good literature of this century was written in the first three-quarters of it."

"Oh! I did not mean to say that," said Miss Mabel Murney with an arch suggestion in her manner that she was a little inclined to "hedge"; "I was, perhaps, moved to extravagances by hearing you compare Howells to the immortal Scott."

"I should be surprised if 'Silas Lapham' does not wear quite as well as 'Meg Merriles,'" rejoined Lewis with a thoroughly convinced air that never fails to be contagious. "Do you know," he went on, turning his eyes from the passing scenery—for they were on the deck of a Muskoka steamer—full upon hers, "that this man, Howells, has compelled the old foggy critics to ignominiously desert their old standards of excellence—else they must have acknowledged him master? Every one remembers the time-honoured canon that made that one the best novelist who held the clearest mirror up to nature; and now they complain of Howells that he is too exact, that he photographs too faithfully the meaner details of life. Then there's Stevenson, writing in our time; what comparison is there between the suggested horror of 'The Master of Ballantrae' and that of, say, 'Bill Sykes' or 'The Murder of Amy Robsart'?"

The strong, tense eyes of Lewis released with a conscious volition the blue ones of Miss Murney from what seemed to be almost a commanded attention, and again wandered off over the sparkling waters and the wildly wooded islands.

The blue eyes still scanned his face, though they were partially blinded by inner thoughtfulness.

"Then why is it," she asked in a moment, "that these later authors are not studied in the schools instead of Scott and—Macaulay?"

"For the same reason," he replied coming back with more than the sparkle of the lake in his eye, "that the whole school system of the present day is wrong-headed and blundering."

"What do you mean?" and the interest deepened in her face.

"Because—," began Lewis.

"Aw! how d' do; Miss Murney; lovely day!" interrupted a voice that would have been pleasing were it not for a clumsily assumed drawl, always put in it by the owner when addressing ladies.

Miss Murney agreed a little impatiently as to the character of the day and Lewis let his face fall into the proper expression of boredom.

"Just now as I was coming up," went on the interrupter, "your friend, Mr. Lewis, looked just as if he were—ah—addressing a meeting in the park,—ha-ha!"

"Mr. Lewis was interesting me very much," quickly returned Miss Murney, noticing that the speaker's idle gad had touched Lewis on a sensitive spot.

"Yes," put in Lewis with a blush under his eyes and honest disgust in his tones; "I am always making a bore of myself—always talking like a lunatic when"—he could not help this return shot—"society merely demands vacuity."

The newcomer, Thompson, felt the pellet but did not see how he could reply so long as the presence of a lady compelled him to deal in conversational caramels; but he was relieved by the surging up to them of a group of campers full of talk about the coming private theatricals at the Paignton House. This fragment of conversation had taken place upon the deck of the steamer *Nipissing* just after it had left Port Carling, where the fantastic loops of the Muskoka lakes are drawn together in a central knot. To the right, the hotel at Oaklands lifted its bare and deserted upper storeys above its be-vined and verandahed ground floor, for all the world like an abnormal baldhead above a pair of merry, social eyes; and off to the left, Ferndale was hiding in its cove. All about rippled the bright soft waters of Lake Rosseau, and ahead what one fancied was the mainland seemed to be constantly breaking into islands with winding canoe channels between and gaily painted summer pavilions glancing through the foliage. They call it "Venetia" up there, and even old Shylock of the Rialto could find no ground for a libel suit.

The groups on the steamer deck struck one as exceedingly varied and yet the varieties were easily classified. There were the campers and other sojourners in Muskoka marked by their bronzed faces and camping costumes.