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## THE TIMES.

A matter of great importance is just now under discussion among the commercial men of Montreal—they advocate the making of Montreal a free port for shipping. Unquestionably this is a movement in the right direction. Montreal is the natural summer port of this Dominion, and the business men of the Province of Ontario are at last awake to that fact. The interest of trade is overbearing their jealousy of the metropolis, and they are finding that it is better to encourage Montreal than New York or Boston. The prosperity of Montreal means the prosperity of the Dominion. But pilotage and towage and harbour dues are too great a drain upon the profits of shipping, and it is high time that an inducement should be offered to shippers to make Montreal their port. As Mr. Cramp well said at the Board of Trade meeting last week, "there can be no doubt that to make Montreal a free port in this respect would be an advertisement to the world of the greatest possible value, and I think that this apparently bold step should be immediately taken." Everything indicates that Government may safely take this step, and the commercial classes ought to use every possible means to induce the Government to accede to their request.

Surely the promoters of the scheme for tunnelling the St. Lawrence are not in earnest, or have not well considered the matter. They should make some enquiries as to the expenses which were incurred in making a tunnel under the Thames at London. It was enormous, and the thing is now practically useless. But the Thames is a mere ditch in comparison with the St. Lawrence. In fact it is demonstrated that river tunnels can never pay. Bridges are cheaper and in every way better. The St. Lawrence is bridged at Montreal, and the Victoria Bridge, although in the possession of the Grand Trunk, is capable of doing a great deal more work, and is not denied to other companies if they will pay a fair price. When the Grand Trunk can be shown to be unreasonable in its rates—taking into account not merely the bridge, but also the line from the bridge to the station, and station privileges—it will be time to talk of, not a tunnel, but another bridge over the river.

Now that the question of the Pacific Railway is again fairly before Parliament, we may hope that wise counsels will prevail. It is a question of the gravest and greatest importance and should be prudently handled. We should consider first what is for the good of the country, and then, how far can we carry out the promises we have made to British Columbia! Undoubtedly the North-west must be opened up. Such a magnificent corn-growing country should not be allowed to lie unused; but the railway ought not to rush far ahead of the population. The too rapid completion of it would involve a needless and ruinous expense; but if it be done mile by mile as needed we shall always be getting our money's worth and not be ruined meantime.

But building the railroad to British Columbia is another matter. True, it would give us communication with eight thousand whites and some thousands of miscellaneous blacks; it would give us a Pacific

sea-board with some good harbours. But what will be the gain to this Dominion? Can we hope to compete with the railroads running into San Francisco? What is the probable value of the trade we shall do with the few thousands of whites and blacks scattered along the Pacific slope? Surely nothing to warrant such an enormous outlay as the building of this railroad means. It may happen that well-intentioned people have to break promises made in days of abnormal prosperity; and since it is evident that we cannot keep the engagement made with the British Columbians, because we have not the means of doing it, we had better tell them so; and if they can make out a clear case of damages, let us pay them to the full. If Mr. Amor de Cosmos will only bring in his bill we might settle it soon.

Mr. Girouard's bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister came up for final discussion on Wednesday, and was strongly supported by petitions. The clergy have taken the matter up, and all who are not hide-bound traditionalists were found to favour it. The lawyers moved in the same direction and told the House what they thought about it; so that the free and intelligent in gospel and law were found on the side of Mr. Girouard. This concurrence of valuable opinion ought to be of considerable service in helping our Senators to come to a decision.

Mr. Hurd has introduced a bill into Congress to put a stop to traffic passing from one part of the United States to another in bond through Canada. No doubt it may look well as a reprisal for our National Policy, but it is hardly likely to have any other end than that of temporarily depressing a Canadian railroad stock which is quoted on the New York Stock Exchange, like the Canada Southern. The Eastern and Western States are too alive to their interests to have legislation dictated by a railway monopoly, whether it be for the supposed benefit of New York, Baltimore, or any other centre. The United States is a huge system, which must be free to be lasting, and Chicago and Maine will join together in desiring to help the Canadian lines to protect them against the imposition to which they would otherwise be subjected.

What is to be done with Alderman Allard, of the Montreal City Council? He is evidently unaccustomed to the society of respectable, decency-loving people. He is very ready to speak always, and always very rough. He habitually breaks some of the Commandments in a manner which must be shocking to an orthodox Jew. He is as pugnacious as any dog in summer, and seems to imagine that he is doing his duty as representing a Ward when he barks his loudest and bites his sharpest. He would probably hold his own in Texas, but is out of place in a civilized city. He *may* be a good business man, faithful and kind-hearted, but he has not convinced the Montreal public of that same as yet. I would recommend that the Aldermen unanimously grant him leave of absence for a few months, and that his constituents send him to a respectable school by day and put him under the care of a priest in the evenings, and then—relegate him to private life.

I am glad to learn that at the winter exhibition of Fine Arts held at Lyons, a water-colour painting by Mr. C. J. Way, of Montreal, was given the "post of honour" amongst the drawings, and that it has been purchased by the "Société des amies des Arts" of that city for their Gallery. As Lyons, next to Paris, is the most artistic city in artistic France, I congratulate Mr. Way on having won so marked a distinction.