

The Peace River Country.

Mr. James Macoun, of the Dominion Geological Survey, who went to the Peace River district to investigate its wheat-growing capabilities, has presented a rather disparaging report, which gives some comfort to the opponents of the Grand Trunk Pacific project. The Peace River Valley, which the Grand Trunk Pacific is expected to traverse, has been described in numerous official and unofficial reports as a granary of the future, equal to the valley of the Saskatchewan. The late Dr. Dawson, the highest authority in the geological service of Canada, gave a most favorable account of it, based upon personal observation. Prof. Macoun's father, Mr. John Macoun, also a member of the geological survey, expressed the same opinion as Dr. Dawson. Mr. James Macoun, who has lived at the southern end of Lesser Slave Lake for eight years, chanced to be in Ottawa when Prof. Macoun's report was made public the other day, and hastened to contradict Macoun's statement that the Peace River Valley was not adapted for wheat-growing. Mr. Macoun speaks from actual experience. Macoun, in the three or four months he spent in the Peace River country, was stationed at the greater part of the time at Dunvegan. At Fort Vermilion, in a latitude 200 miles north of Dunvegan, the Hudson Bay Company has two large mills grinding the wheat produced in that neighborhood and is now erecting a third. Prof. Saunders, director of the Dominion Experimental Farms, has shown that the discovery and breeding of new varieties of wheat, which ripen earlier than the Red Fife, have indefinitely extended the wheat-growing area in a northern direction. We are very much mistaken if the Government will accept Prof. Macoun's report as the last word on the subject. It will be cited as an argument against the Grand Trunk Pacific enterprise, but higher considerations require that there shall be more thorough and exhaustive experiments before the public is asked to believe that the great Peace River Valley has no future as a wheat-growing country. Prof. Macoun is, no doubt, sincere in his conclusions, but they are only one man's opinion, and are in opposition to testimony as expert as his own.

Will Newfoundland Come In?

Premier Bond, of Newfoundland, says there is no sentiment in the island favorable to incorporation with the Dominion. Newfoundland, like Canada, has enjoyed great prosperity for several years, and on the principle of let well enough alone there is no outcry for constitutional changes. A touch of depression may put the people of the island in a different mood. In 1895 they were knocking at the door of the Dominion for admission, and the fact that Sir William Whiteway, the leader of the Opposition, has recently declared in favor of the entrance of the island into the Canadian confederation, indicates that the issue is not as extinct as Sir Robert Bond would have it. The next move may come from the Dominion. Sir Wilfrid Laurier having hinted that something of the sort will be brought to the attention of Parliament during the present session. Any attempt to coerce or bully Newfoundland into confederation will defeat its own purpose. Canada need not disdain to approach the colony as a suitor. The prize is worth going after and public opinion in the island will be conciliated if the Canadian overtures are made in a discreet and tactful manner. Canada is in a position to offer better terms than nine years ago, though subsequent events have shown that the Dominion Government of that day let a great opportunity slip when it refused to accept Newfoundland's proposals. The island belongs geographically to the Canadian system. Should it fall into the hands of a foreign power, say the United States, Canada would have no outlook on the Atlantic, as Newfoundland includes a long stretch of the coast of Labrador and dominates the ocean trade routes of the Dominion. This strategic importance is more keenly realized in this country than it was a few years ago, and if the Government decides to offer generous inducements to the ancient colony to abandon its political isolation, the question will not be made a party one in Canada. If the French shore difficulty has been removed, the argument for union will be strengthened. It is gratifying to know that the Dominion Government has addressed itself to this problem of rounding out confederation.

The Source of Corruption.

Mr. Lincoln Steffens, who has made a penetrating study of municipal corruption in the United States, takes a wider survey of the subject in the April number of McClure's. This time his scrutiny embraces a whole state, the state of Missouri, and he sums up his conclusions in this terrible generalization: "Not the politician, not the bribe-taker, but the bribe-giver, the man we are so proud of, our successful business man—he is the source and sustenance of our bad government. The captain of industry is the man to catch. His is the trail to follow." Mr. Steffens says his gripings into the misgovernment of cities have drawn him everywhere, but always out of politics into business, and out of the cities into the state. The corruption of

American politics is political, but financial and industrial, too. Mr. Folk, the circuit attorney of St. Louis, convicted the boss and members of the boodle combine that was selling out the city, but he did not break the ring because back of the boodlers stood the big business men who were buying the city up. The boodlers who wanted to turn state's evidence, or as we call it in Canada, King's evidence, "stood pat." Ed. Butler, the boss of St. Louis, assured them that the courts would reverse all Folk's cases. Sure enough the boodle cases were reversed, the court giving a ruling which made it necessary for Folk to reinstate and re-try half a dozen of them. Not a single boodler is in jail. Butler has been restored to power and has helped to nominate candidates for the vacancies on the bench which was to try the boodle cases, and also for the court which will hear these cases and his own, on appeal. While Steffens was probing the city, he kept an eye on the state, and getting hold of a clue to corruption in the Legislature, followed it until the Lieutenant-Governor of the state fled to escape him. He was brought back and confessed.

"The lid was off Missouri. The stone Mr. Folk had had so long to leave unturned, was lifted. What was under it requiring the light and whirling off into their dark holes, were state senators and state officers, state committeemen, and party leaders, but also there were the Western Union Telegraph Company, the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the St. Louis and San Francisco, the Iron Mountain and Southern, the Wabash, the St. Louis Transit Company, the breweries, the stock yards, the telephone companies, business men of St. Louis, St. Joseph and Kansas City—the big business of the whole state. There they were, the 'contemptible bribe-takers' and the very 'respectable bribe-givers,' all doing business together. So they still traveled in pairs; and the highway still lay between the deadly parallels—business and politics."

There is no public opinion to punish the business boodler, and Mr. Folk has decided to go into politics and run for governor with "boodle" as the sole issue. The machine element in the Democratic party is shrieking and raging, but Folk has been received with great enthusiasm by the people. It may be that he will lead the state to better things, but as Mr. Steffens puts it: "Some power greater than Folk greater than that of the people of Missouri, must rise to bring home to the captain of industry the truth: That business, important as it is, is not sacred; that not everything that pays is right; that, if bribery is treason, if the corrupt politician is a traitor, then the corrupting business man is an enemy of the republic."

ME AND SULLY.

[Baltimore American.]
Two weeks ago I envied him. The millions he had got; But now his pile is like as slim As mine is, like as not. But he is worse than I, because I'm used to it, you see, And he, though wondrous rich he was, Is now as poor as me. In climbing up he didn't seem To care who else was broke; He would realize his dream—No thought for other folk. But now he knows just how it feels To be a human wreck. And have the world's financial heels Caving on his neck. I was impatient when I knew He'd made a monstrous stack. I sighed: "What ever will I do—Alas, alas, alack!" I thought me such a common dub, With skills and useless hands. Again I've learned that every tub On its own bottom stands.

Yet I've some troubles, like as not, That Sully'd hate to own. Just as there's some that Sully's got, Would make me sweat and groan. The lesson, then, from Sully is Along this special line: He's glad my worriment ain't his, I'm glad that his ain't mine.

A SOLEMN THOUGHT.

[New Orleans Times-Democrat.]
It is a solemn thought, A solemn, of a verity, With pregnant meaning fraught. That we were once posterity. The people were forgot, Even the very perk of them, Were once unduly not. We know what we would think of them. From this a lesson good. We learn about futurity; Cease vain solicitude, And rest in full security.

THE GERM THEORY RUN MAD.

[Baltimore American.]
Now that the scientists are discovering everything to be germ-infested and dangerous, only one more point of attack remains. That will fall when the germ hunters discover that the human breed is swarming with bacilli and that the only way to be entirely safe is to stop breathing. Already the flat has gone forth that we must stop eating and drinking, so that the last alternative is perhaps merely the logical conclusion of the whole germ theory.

ISN'T WORTH IT.

[Washington Star.]
"Don't go 'round' tellin' yoh had luck stories. De 'mount of sympathy yoh gits ain' worth de suspicion yoh excites of bein' a Jonah."

SOME WAR WITSKY.

[New Orleans Times-Democrat.]
A dashing young soldier named Itsky By a Japanese bullet was hit; He said, "I'll not fight, I don't think it's right, And instead I'll gitupanditaki."

A PLEASANT OUTLOOK.

[Bystander in Weekly Sun.]
Prof. Ashley, once of the University of Toronto, is now dean of the faculty of commerce in the new university at Birmingham, the city of "Our Joe." He comes out strongly in the Chamberlainian line, advocating a commercial union of Great Britain and the colonies against the rest of the world. But the part he assigns to the colonies is one which will not be enthusiastically assumed. They are "to avoid the evils of overhasty industrialism." "Their main interest lies in the distribution of population over the land, and the maintenance of its physique by rural life." In plain words, they are to raise wheat and leave manufactures to the imperial country. Pleasant reading this for our Manufacturers' Association!

POLITICAL ABILITY.

[Hamilton Herald.]
A necessary qualification of Ontario statesmanship these days is the ability to go without sleep.

FRENCH CHARACTERS.

[Dr. Emil Reich in the Contemporary Review.]
The statistical returns of money developing by inheritance show a total for France nearly 30 times as great as those for England, Austria or Germany. It is the great commercial houses to receive money by legacy; in Hungary the legacy has become so fabulous as to be the stock subject for gibes; but in France the accumulation of riches by bequest is so common as to be almost the rule. There is a hint of the great wealth of France in the peasant dowries up from \$2,000 to \$10,000, which are by no means uncommon. * * *

ALDERMEN'S MINDS NOT MADE UP IN THE TELEPHONE MATTER

Fate of the Franchise Application Is Yet Unknown—Situation in Toronto.

That the aldermen have not made up their minds as to what they will do regarding the granting of a telephone franchise in this city is demonstrated by the action of No. 1 committee, when considering the estimates, the other night. It was understood that the city had two offers of a cash bonus for a franchise—one from the Bell Telephone Company of \$2,500 for an exclusive franchise, and one from the Canadian Telephone and Telegraph Company of \$1,000 for a competitive franchise, but in estimating the receipts the committee placed the sum which the city can rely upon securing from the franchise at \$1,000 only. If the Bell proposition be accepted later on the aldermen will stand \$1,500 to the good, whilst if the new company's offer be accepted the city will break even.

Toronto has three offers for a franchise—one from the Bell Company, one from the Canadian Company, and one from the Stark Company, the latter being a purely Toronto concern, who are in the heat, light and power business, and wish now to extend their sphere of action to the telephone system. The people are much worked up over the granting of a franchise there, and a certain Mr. G. Dugger sent a letter to the papers, which contained much information of interest to town-dwellers. Mr. Dugger says:

"It has been said that the city engineer estimated the cost per line of a system for Toronto at \$300, notwithstanding the fact that the official report states that the cost of a municipal telephone system for 10,000 subscribers, to be \$120 per line. I may also add that at the time the city engineer prepared this estimate, by his instructions, I made independent estimates for the purpose of comparison, my figures averaging \$125 per line. Both these estimates were for manually operated systems, with underground wires, and equal in every respect to the latest equipment of the Bell Telephone Company. I will, however, go further and say that there is no reason why the cost per line should exceed \$100; in fact, I believe the present estimates are too high, and the man of the municipal telephone committee, received a letter from an

CITY TAX RATE AND ESTIMATES LIVE TOPICS IN CIVIC CIRCLES

Cut in the Figures for Street Improvement—Somebody Sat On Ald. Cooper.

The estimates and the tax rate continue to be the liveliest topics of discussion in municipal circles these days. As was announced some days ago, the proposed fire hall for the north end has gone the way of all such previous proposals, and the market-house as far as good as dead, if the opinion of several of the aldermen are to be relied upon. As a sample of what the whole of the aldermen are disposed to do to the estimates of the committees, it may be cited that the board of works presented one of \$24,000 for streets, and that it was promptly cut to \$20,000. Last year the board spent but \$18,900, and as the present allowance is \$24,000, an increase of \$1,100, it is likely that if the council find themselves in a pinch to keep down the tax rate, this item will be further pared another couple thousand.

The decision to do without the North End fire hall and the repairs to the market-house means a cut of \$1,500 in the estimates. This year the council also begin with a cash balance of \$1,500. The other day City Auditor Jewell made a trip to Walkerville to audit the books of the Pere Marquette, with a view to determining the city's percentage on the earnings of the company over \$80,000. The city draws \$10,000 a year, and this percentage for the lease of the road. Last year the city received only a portion of the percentage to which it was entitled, and the result of the audit was that the Pere Marquette have handed over to the city, in addition to the \$1,500 percentage paid last year, the sum of \$2,500, or \$4,000 in all for the percentage last year. Thus the L. and P. S. Railway earned last year \$14,000 in rental, adding the extra \$2,500 to the surplus from last year, the council have now on hand, \$5,700, to begin work on.

SAT ON ALD. COOPER.

There has been some talk of increasing salaries around the city hall of late, and in the opinion of a majority of the aldermen the men whose names have been mentioned are well-entitled to an increase.

One name was mentioned which did not meet with the approval of the aldermen at the meeting on Thursday night, but Ald. Cooper supported it vigorously. And the way he was sat upon by the aldermen, it was a revelation to Ald. Cooper and the other aldermen present.

Ald. Cooper undertook to tell the mayor that the increase referred to had to be made, or he would oppose the other increases when they came before the council. This irritated the mayor and he landed on Ald. Cooper with both feet. "I took hear, Cooper," he said, "I won't hear you from now on. I'm going to tell you for your own good to keep quiet."

People who have only seen England and America can with difficulty realize how thoroughly the Frenchman pervades every detail of family life. Nothing is done without her consent and counsel. In business she has her say, and many of the great commercial houses trace their descent in the feminine line. It is the Frenchwoman who rules from the counting room, who keeps the books, who sees the travelers. Those who would wish for a tangible concrete proof of the Frenchwoman's supreme influence should remember one striking feature of French cities—the frequency with which on shop signs the names of husband and wife are coupled together and the common occurrence of widows' names in the same way. * * *

ALDERMEN'S MINDS NOT MADE UP IN THE TELEPHONE MATTER

American contractor to the effect that he would be pleased to have the contract at that figure. * * * Dunstan's statement that there are 12,000 subscribers in Toronto, the latest 'Bell' directory fails to record more than 8,700, two-thirds of which are business connections, which brings the average rate, per subscriber per annum, business and residence, to \$43.35. The rate in Glasgow, with 10,000 subscribers, over an area of 18 square miles (Toronto area is about 15 miles), is \$35.00; Stockholm, Sweden, with a radius of 4½ square miles and over 10,000 subscribers, with reduced rates for limited and measured service; St. Petersburg, Russia, is instance of service, but 24½ subscribers, at \$28 per annum. It may be said that the cost of construction and material is less in these cities, but the cost of the instruments being very much higher, and in Stockholm, where the great 'Ericsson' factory is situated, the estimate of the Ericsson Company for the St. Petersburg system was \$28 per line.

"The fact is overlooked that in the United States the independent rates in large cities are governed by the extortionate charges of the 'Bell' before the advent of competition, and from no basis as to what rates might prevail if it were only a question of earning a profit on capital legitimately invested. The practice of independent promoters has been to water stocks and bond the plants, with the result that some have become millionaires in the short period that has elapsed since the expiry of the 'Bell' patents. It is not to be supposed that a capitalization of less than \$100 per line, of 200 miles of low cost lines, with no bonded indebtedness, and which has paid 8 per cent per annum for the last five years, at rates of \$8 for business and \$30 for residence, and country rates as low in some cases as \$9 per annum."

"It does not, however, concern the citizens of Toronto what rates are charged by the 'Bell' company, but what does concern them is the fact that a company, whose directors are citizens worthy of all confidence in regard to sound business judgment and integrity, offers to supply service at much lower rates than hitherto, such rates being rendered possible by improved methods of construction, which they control. Four thousand contracts have been entered into by the citizens for this service, which number would be trebled in a very short time from the granting of a franchise. Are those citizens to be debared from the advantages offered by this company for no better reasons than those which have been advanced against the Stark Telephone, Light and Power Company, up to the contrary? On the contrary, should not the city council render every assistance to enable the company to carry out its offer, within the shortest possible period?"

from you," said Ald. Wyatt. "We have enough of you, to date, Mind that." Ald. Cooper appeared to deem discretion the better part of valor, and he was lamblike and subdued thenceforth.

BLAMES WEST LONDONERS.

Though he deeply sympathizes with the people of West London who have suffered through the late flood, through being frightened from their homes or having their premises filled with water, Engineer Graydon, nevertheless, he claims that those who have nobody to blame but themselves. Had they waited until the corporation laborers allowed the water to escape from the village there would have been no gaping holes in the breakwater, as the laborers would have gone about their work systematically and would have put in the work which would have prevented the earth being washed away. Mr. Graydon says also that the water in the village was not due to that could be done to repair the break made by the people.

There is one point, however, upon which the West Londoners appear to have good cause for a grievance. It seems that under the agreement by which West London came into the city, the latter agreed to spend a certain percentage of West London taxes on the breakwater each year. Last year the city agreed to spend \$125, but the auditors' report shows that only \$660 was spent on the breakwater during 1903. The city's share of \$125 was paid on the embankment. Just what reason the city had for cutting down the amount to \$660 last year is not quite clear, but it may possibly be satisfactorily explained.

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