

routes respectively. Another advantage attending this site is the close proximity to the Caughnawaga quarries, where stone can be obtained for the piers and the embankments. All the spans will be deck spans except the middle or channel span, which will be thorough one. The proposed bridge will be a double track one, and constructed in the form of a double intersection truss bridge.

THE ACADEMY OF LETTERS.

Several weeks ago the readers of the daily press were somewhat astonished by the announcement that an Academy of Letters "had been formed under the patronage of the Governor-General." Particulars were not wanting as to the officials of the new institution. Dr. DAWSON was the President, and various other most worthy gentlemen occupied posts of honor at the heads of the departments into which the new Academy was divided. The names, too, of a number of the members of this learned body, some of them well known, some who had hitherto concealed their literary light under the journalistic bushel, were published with all the dignity which should properly belong to such an announcement.

It was somewhat of a relief to those amongst us who viewed with a little suspicion such a very mushroom growth as this would seem to be, to find that either the inventive genius of the reporter who was responsible for the paragraph had led him into error, or that the enthusiasm of the promoters of the scheme had carried them away. The foundation of an Academy will, we presume, require some overt act of the powers that be. Whether Parliament is to be called upon to pass a Bill for its creation, or whether the exercise of the prerogative of the Governor-General will suffice to call it into being, it may be safely assumed that something more than an informal meeting of a few self-chosen *litterateurs* will be needed to bring the scheme to that maturity, which according to the papers it has already attained.

The real facts of the case, so far as they can be ascertained, are briefly these: The Marquis of Lorne, it was known, before his departure, had interested himself in the scheme of which these are the fruits. At his suggestion, a meeting of several persons interested in the proposed Academy was to be called during his absence, to discuss the feasibility of the plan, suggest the persons best fitted in their opinion to form the new body, and submit for his satisfaction on his return, the information acquired on these and kindred branches of the subject. This, then, has been done; this is, in fact, all that could be done and it is the steps which the Government, we presume we may say which the Marquis will take, that alone have any interest for us now.

It would be waste of time to enter now upon the discussion of the *pros* and *cons* of the Academy that is to be. For that it is to be as certain as the most reliable of Mr. VENNOR'S prophesies, to say the least of it. Captious and disagreeable persons will point to the complete failure of the Academy of Arts to fulfil the bright promises with which it started. Still more disagreeable persons—who have been left out of the list—will be quite confident that the affair cannot succeed without them; while—tell it not in Gath—

there are those who even doubt the ability of our great Dominion to furnish twenty names fit to inscribe upon the Roll of Fame. The majority, however, will wisely reflect that the Rubicon is past, and that as the thing must be, it is well to make the best of it.

But one thing there is to do, and which it is imperative upon the press to do thoroughly. The Governor-General has—with all due respect—but a limited knowledge of the literary talent of this country. He will not unnaturally be inclined to accept the report tendered him, the substance of which we have already, and without more ado to adopt it in default of any outside suggestions. It is the more incumbent upon us then to point out that the list of proposed members, as we have it from the daily press, contains some very serious omissions, which, if not corrected, will bid fair to make the whole scheme ridiculous in the eyes of the *cognoscenti*.

It were too invidious a task to criticize the names that do appear individually. There are several which, no doubt, are entitled to a place upon the roll of any literary institution that may be given to the country. Others may perhaps have talents of which we have never heard, but which may be developed in the hot-bed of Academy distinction. But so far as we can see, it is only those who can speak for themselves who have been heard hitherto, and a word should be said in favour of those retiring spirits who seek no distinction for themselves, but who are doubly worthy of it on that account.

Where, for example, is GEORGE MURRAY'S name? A graceful writer, an able historian, withal a poet of no little force and originality, he is a head and shoulders above the little men who crowd in before him. Where again is the Abbé VERREAU? Buried at home in the books he loves and knows so well, he asks, it is true, but to be left alone with them. He seeks no distinction; but his name would do more honour to the Academy than his title of Academician could bring to him. If the new body is to be in any sense representative, it is such men as these who must grace its muster roll.

One other name has been left to the last, because its omission seems so extraordinary as to require special comment. What are we to say of a meeting, which, in selecting the literary talent of Canada, has forgotten the name of CHAUVEAU? Historian, novelist, poet, the most notable man of letters probably that Canada has produced—in a word, the *doyen* of French literature. It is not too much to say that to constitute an Academy of Letters and omit his name, will be to make the whole affair ridiculous in the eyes of the world, or at least of the literary portion of it.

There may be other names that should be mentioned, but we forbear to press our opinions further. Fortunately, the selection of the Academicians will not be with us. It will be an invidious task at best, and one which we do not envy the Governor-General, upon whose shoulders probably whatever there may be of blame will rest. That the task will be performed conscientiously on his part we do not for an instant doubt. We would only ask him not to be guided blindfold by the recommendations of any meeting, but to endeavour, if the Academy really is to be an honour to him and to the country, to make it really a representative of whatever of literary genius the country does possess.