

Messenger and Visitor

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXVI.

Vol. XX.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1904.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME LV.

No. 3

Irrigation in the West.

It is now reported that the plan of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for extensive irrigation of its lands in the West has become an assured fact, and that tenders will be called shortly in Vancouver, Chicago, Montreal, Winnipeg and Calgary for the main canal excavations. The work, it is said, will be started near Calgary, and if it prove as successful as the C. P. R. engineers believe it will, more than 3,000,000 acres of land will eventually be reclaimed by the company and rendered capable of cultivation. Of this great extent of land it is expected that about half will be rendered fit for growing cereals, while the remainder will be devoted to the cultivation of grass and to grazing purposes. The plan of the Company will at first however include the irrigation of only 300,000 acres. If success attends the enterprise, the reclaimed land will be colonized and the irrigation works will be extended until the entire area is covered. There will be two canals to irrigate the tract, a main canal thirty-five miles long, with a width at bottom of sixty feet and carrying ten feet depth of water. This canal will be excavated first and will be used to carry water to the secondary canal which when completed will be 115 miles long. The project is the largest of the kind ever attempted on this Continent.

The Responsibility. Investigation into the causes of the Iroquois Theatre disaster indicates a wide-reaching responsibility in the matter. Building Commissioner Williams, under examination at the coroner's inquest, admitted that during the construction of the building he had visited it but once, that time being but two weeks prior to the opening of the theatre on November 21. He had never looked at the plans of the building except on one occasion when he saw them for perhaps ten or fifteen seconds. Personally he knew nothing of the construction of the building. On the occasion when he visited the theatre he considered it to be the most fire-proof building of its kind he had ever seen. He admitted, however, that he had allowed the builders to place pine joists in certain places beneath the stage instead of steel supports as called for by the building ordinances. This was in order to facilitate the working of trap doors which were required in the production of the play, "Mr. Bluebeard." In answer to the question why the building inspectors had not done their work more thoroughly, the Commissioner declared that the force was far too small to do the work imposed upon it. He had made repeated requests for additional help, but was informed that the city could not afford it. The Commissioner declared that last October he had reported to Mayor Harrison that not one of the theatres in Chicago was complying with the ordinances. The Mayor turned over his report to the Council which turned it over to a committee, and no step to alter the dangerous conditions which were known to exist was ever taken.

A New Nile Dam Proposed.

The success and the valuable results attending the construction of the Assouan Dam on the Nile naturally leads engineers to consider the feasibility of other enterprises of a similar character. Sir William Wilcocks, the original designer of the Assouan Dam, is said to be studying the problem how to secure perennial irrigation for 1,500,000 acres of land in Egypt not served by the Assouan barrage. For this purpose some 300,000,000 cubic yards of water are required. His proposal is to construct a sister reservoir on the side of the Wady Rayan—a deep and broad ravine in the great oasis of the Favoum—which, working in conjunction with the Assouan Dam, would supply all the needs of Egypt from within the State's own borders, leaving the question of the irrigation of the Soudan provinces with their 1,500,000 of rich cultivable soil, to be settled by the utilization of the headwaters of the Nile. This plan, supplemented by raising the level of the Assouan Dam by 20 feet, would cost about £2,500,000. The bringing under perennial irrigation of land at present depending on the flood waters alone would increase the value by each acre by £30, thus adding £60,000,000 to the agricultural wealth of Egypt, and the annual cotton crop would attain in an average year 10,000,000 cantars (a cantar equals 90 pounds), worth £25,000,000, a fact of special significance for the thinking public at a time when the question of the sources of England's future cotton supply has become one of burning in-

terest. The average annual cotton yield of Egypt is between five and six million cantars.

International Fish Hatchery.

A despatch from Washington gives currency to the report that Mr. Hay, Secretary of State in Mr. Roosevelt's cabinet, has decided to ask the Canadian Government to join in a conference looking to an international fish hatchery on the Fraser River in British Columbia for the propagation of salmon. The conference if agreed upon will probably, it is said, be participated in by the United States Commissioner, the Fish Commissioner for the State of Washington and officials in charge of the Department of Fisheries and Marine for Canada. The plan has been urged by Senator Foster, of Washington, who says that unless some heroic course is taken the salmon supply will be exhausted. An immense number of dealers are interested in salmon canning establishments in the United States and Canada, which are supplied almost entirely by the spawn from the Fraser river.

The Clallam Disaster.

The sinking of the steamer *Clallam* near the entrance to the harbor of Victoria, B. C., on the 8th inst, involving the loss of fifty-four lives, adds another to the list of terrible disasters which have occurred within the past few weeks. The *Clallam* was a regular daily passenger packet plying between Seattle and Victoria. Near the entrance to the harbor a very heavy cross sea was encountered which retarded the steamer's progress, and it was soon discovered that a dead light had been stove in by the waves and that the water was rushing through it in a volume which resisted all efforts to stop it. Two boats were launched and filled with passengers, but were unable to breast the heavy seas. And a number more lives were lost in an attempt to launch a third boat. Those who remained on board worked heroically in an endeavor to keep the steamer afloat and succeeded in doing so until a tug arrived from Fort Townsend and took the disabled vessel in tow. There seemed still to be a possibility of saving the *Clallam* but her hull began to give way, and she was found to be in a sinking condition, but before she went down the crews of the tugs by heroic efforts were able to save nearly all who had remained on board the *Clallam*. Quite a number of the victims of the disaster were women, all the women passengers having been placed in the boats as affording the greatest hope of their safety. Quite a number of those who were lost lived formerly in Ontario or in the Maritime Provinces. There is reported to be much indignation in Victoria over the collapse of the *Clallam*, which, it is said, occurred in only a moderately rough sea. It is charged that, although a new boat, she had been hastily constructed and was not sea-worthy, that she was ill-fund in some respects and unsuitable for the service in which she was placed. A rigid investigation is demanded.

The Navies of Russia and Japan.

According to a comparison of the naval strength of Japan with that of Russia in eastern waters, by a correspondent of the *London Daily Mail*, the advantage is with Japan, and that for three reasons of considerable importance. In the first place Japan possesses 12 armored ships, capable of fighting in line, to Russia's nine. In the second place behind this first line, Japan has a number of older ships, which might be very valuable for the purpose of holding the sea, when the first line has been disabled or injured in battle. In the third place, Japan has far greater repairing facilities than Russia. To Russia's four docks in two dockyards, she can oppose eight large docks, and numerous smaller ones, well distributed in several yards. She could thus simultaneously dock and repair eight large armored ships. All twelve ships are believed to be in the standing squadron, commanded by Admiral Togo, a splendid officer, of great bravery and resolution. Two armored cruisers also have just been purchased from the Argentine government, and are on their way from Genoa where they were built, to the Far East. There are two old armored ships, of use in the second line, four very fast protected cruisers, twelve weaker cruisers, seven old cruisers, seventeen destroyers and sixty effective torpedo boats. In the war with

China the Japanese torpedo boats did great execution as torpedo work suits the Japanese temperament. The number of men on the active list in 1903 was 28,000, with 2,100 officers. The Russian fleet in the Far East is commanded by Vice-Admiral Starck. Besides the ships *Russia* possesses two large old-fashioned cruisers of some power, the *Russia* and *Rurik*, and five smaller protected cruisers of high speed. There are six or seven other cruisers, for the most part of little fighting value: two ships of the volunteer fleet, fitted out as cruisers, and used for scouting, as they steam 20 knots; and a number of gunboats. The torpedo flotilla, according to Russian returns, is three catchers, twelve destroyers, and twelve torpedo boats, but there is reason for thinking that there are a number of destroyers building or in reserve at Port Arthur, which would bring the strength up to sixteen or twenty in this class. Under orders for, or on their way to, the Far East are three cruisers and eleven destroyers, in addition to the battleships mentioned above.

In the Far East.

Russia and Japan are still negotiating, and at present there appears to be, in certain quarters at least, rather more hope that war will be averted. This hope is perhaps based partly upon the pacific expression of the Czar at his New Year's reception to the diplomatic corps in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. In conversation with Mr. Kurino, the Japanese Minister to Russia, the Czar is reported to have emphasized the high value which he places upon the good and neighborly relations between Japan and Russia and to have said:—"I desire and intend to do all in my power to maintain peace in the Far East." It is also surmised that Great Britain's attitude toward the situation involved in the negotiations between Russia and Japan, as indicated in a recent speech of Prime Minister Balfour, is having its effect in causing Russia to adopt a less aggressive policy. It is accordingly rumored that Russia is prepared to make concessions which it is expected Japan will accept. However Russia's apparently more conciliatory attitude may simply mean that she needs more time for preparation. Japan on her part is evidently remitting none of her diligence in preparing for war, and it seems certain that war will come unless Russia shall make important concessions.

Dominion Politics.

The question which has been discussed with so much interest as to who was to be Mr. Blair's successor in the Railway Department, has at length been settled by the appointment of Hon. Henry R. Emmerson as Minister of Railways. The appointment will, we presume, be as satisfactory, not only to the party in power but to the country generally, as any other which the Government could have made. Mr. Emmerson is a man of recognized ability, he is in the prime of life and has had a good deal of experience in public affairs. The Department over which he has been called to preside is one which involves large responsibility and which could, in justice to the interests of the country, be entrusted only to a man of high character and first-class ability. The appointment must accordingly be to Mr. Emmerson a most gratifying assurance of the confidence reposed in him by the Premier and his colleagues in the Government. It will afford scope for the exercise of large administrative powers and constitute a somewhat severe test of ability. As the only member of the Government in New Brunswick the leadership of his party in the Province will naturally devolve on the Minister of Railways. In common with Mr. Emmerson's many friends among the readers of the *Messenger and Visitor*, we trust that he may be found fully equal to these large responsibilities, discharging the important duties committed to him in such a manner as shall win honor for himself and faithfully serve the interests of the country.—There is to be at least one other change in the cabinet. Hon. M. E. Bernier has tendered his resignation as Minister of Island Revenue to accept appointment as a member of the Railway Commission. It is said that Mr. Bernier is to be succeeded in the Island Revenue Department by Hon. L. P. Brodeur, speaker of the House of Commons. Mr. Rudolph Lemieux is spoken of as probable successor to Mr. Brodeur as Speaker. The question as to whether there would be another session of Parliament before a general election is now, it appears, definitely settled in favor of another session. According to an official statement from Ottawa given out on Friday, the Grand Trunk Railway Company has asked for certain modifications of the contract which it entered into during the last session, and as the Government is of opinion that such modifications must be submitted to and discussed by Parliament, it is therefore the intention of the Prime Minister to advise His Excellency, the Governor in General, to call a session at an early day.—It is said that the Railway Commission has practically been organized. It will consist of Hon. A. G. Blair, Chairman, with a salary of \$10,000, and Hon. M. E. Bernier, and Prof. James Mills of the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, whose salaries will be \$8,000 each.