

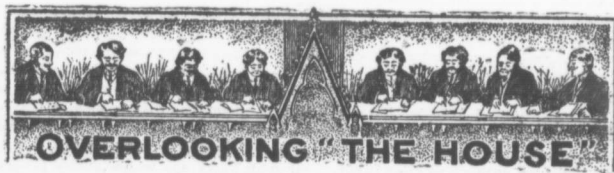
EVENTS

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Whole No. 321.



MOST of the week in the House of Commons has been spent on the Autonomy Bill, in committee of the whole. It is being clearly shown in the course of the discussion over this important bill that there are questions more important relating to it than the much talked of school question. A very interesting discussion took place exemplifying this on Tuesday. Under the C. P. R. Act of 1881, confirming the contract of 1880, the station grounds, sidings, rolling stock, lands, and other property of the C. P. R. were declared to be forever exempt from taxation, the land, at all events, for a period of twenty years from the issue of the patent. This exemption was made after the vote to the Northwest Territories and to any new province afterwards established.

A clause in the present Autonomy Bill

re-enacts the exemption clause of the Act of 1881 and to this several members took objection. Their argument was that whatever rights the C. P. R. had were created by the Act of 1881 and that it was unnecessary as well as inexpedient to confirm an exemption that was obnoxious to the people of the Northwest. Mr. Walter Scott moved an amendment in the form of an addition to clause 23, declaring that the clause should not prejudice the right of parliament, by expropriation or otherwise, to obtain a relinquishment of the company's rights under the contract of 1880.

Mr. Haggart took the ground that parliament had no right to apply this exemption to a new province. He held that it was outside the power of parliament. Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that he and his

colleague: when in opposition in 1881 protested against this clause but that Mr. Haggart and his friends had forced it through. It became law and they had to recognize that fact. He suggested that the best course to pursue would be for the new provinces to pass an act taxing the railway and then the matter would be settled by the courts, and they would determine whether Mr. Haggart was right or wrong in his view. There were good lawyers who thought that he was wrong and so there were two sides to the case.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Minister of Justice, declared that parliament would be violating every canon of decency and of good faith if an attempt were now to be made to impair a solemn obligation.

While contending for the observance of contracts Mr. R. L. Borden, the leader of the opposition, wished to distinguish between that and legislative powers. The province was bound to observe the contract, and perhaps this clause was a notice to them that it existed.

The discussion proved to be an interesting and an important one. In the end Mr. Scott's amendment was declared lost and the clause adopted without an amendment.

There are a couple of things about the new House of Commons which make it awkward for doorkeepers, policemen and others. It is difficult to become acquainted with every one of the 214 members, and so it happened the other day that one of the Dominion police at the entrance to the corridor stopped Dr. Walsh, the member for Huntingdon and a messenger tried to stop Mr. Crawford, the member for Portage la Prairie from going down stairs to the dining room to procure his lunch. It would hardly do to ask the members to wear a badge, and so we suppose that on

the rare occasions when employees do not recognize the members the latter takes it good naturedly though not exactly as a compliment.

Some papers have discussed the question of pensions for retired public men in Canada. In this country the majority of our public men are poor, largely by reason of the devotion of their time to public affairs. If they had devoted the same time and the same ability to the pursuit of wealth they would probably be well off. While in office the state provides a salary that gives the minister of the Crown sufficient income to live on, but the question arises, what is to become of him when he is forced to retire from office? He is not in a position to resume where he left off perhaps ten, fifteen or twenty years before, and he is equally unable to branch out in any new original fashion. To our mind it would be a most appropriate and just policy for the country to say in such case, we will set apart out of the public funds a few hundreds a year as an allowance for the retired minister, and in compensation for his public services. The principle has been recognized in this country in the case of Sir John Thompson whose widow received a vote of \$25,000 from Parliament. In England the law says that a minister of the crown who has been in office for a period of three years may upon retirement from office apply for a pension. This is to guard against the spectacle of a minister who has served the crown and has served the people even for so short a period as three years being compelled to take up some obscure employment. An old public servant either in a province or in the Dominion should not be allowed to retire without a pension based on the practice in England.

Mr. Winston Churchill, M. P.

TODAY, says a contemporary writer, Winston Churchill is the centre of the British political arena. He is the most conspicuous and in many respects the ablest of British rising statesmen. He has gone from the Unionist to the Liberal benches in the House of Commons, and it is safe to predict that in the near future he will be Liberal leader in the House. Speaking of his career, and particularly of his military adventures, Lord Dufferin once remarked, "On every occasion he has shown that chivalrous courage which becomes a high-minded gentleman, and what is just as important, that capacity, that skill and that resource that bear testimony to his intellectual ability."

Mr. Winston Churchill is audacity incarnate. He does dare and never ceases to dare. In this he is the true son of his father. Both the Churchills entered Parliament at the same age. To be an M. P. at twenty five and a prospective party leader at thirty is a lot which has fallen to them, and to them only in our generation.

Winston Churchill's grandfather was the seventh duke of Marlborough, at one time lord lieutenant of Ireland in a Tory administration. The present Churchill was born in 1874. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, Winston finished at Sandhurst, with honors, in 1894. The next year he was appointed lieutenant in the Fourth Hussars. Soon, however, he obtained leave to visit Cuba, which was then in the throes of her ten years war with Spain. His father had been correspondent for the Daily Graphic in South Africa; the son was special correspondent for the same journal in Cuba. He saw service under Martinez

Campos, and was decorated for his bravery. No sooner had he reached home than his regiment was ordered to India. All through the frontier was in Malakand he fought with the Thirty-first Punjab Infantry and wrote for the Daily Telegraph. For his valor he was again decorated. When he returned to London he immediately joined the force of General Kitchener for the reconquest of Khartoum, all the time acting as correspondent for the Morning Post. His stay with Kitchener was one of adventure, and he was in the march from Atbara to Khartoum, and in the battle of Omdurman, which he described as an eye-witness. In his book, "The River War," he told the story of the conquest of the Sudan, and in his despatches to the Morning Post he criticized the work of his commander-in-chief so daringly and so truly that his political reputation was made. He however, soon concluded that he could be more useful out of the service.

It was not until the Boer war, however, that Winston Churchill rose to the first rank of war correspondents. He was the luckiest and smartest, and certainly the most picturesque personality of the newspaper writers during that conflict. He was taken prisoner in the early part of the war, escaped, and told all about it in his news letters home. His correspondence marked him as a man of distinction—a man who was not only a keen observer and a bright writer but who had the political instinct in his blood. At first he was certain that the Boers, considering their courage and the strength of their religious conviction, would surely win, and it was

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Mr. Winston Churchill, M. P.

some time, he says, before he could believe in a British triumph. In March, 1900, he published in the Morning Post his famous appeal for dealing with the Boers in "a reasonable spirit of conciliation."

Mr. Churchill entered Parliament as a Tory Democrat, and a Tory Democrat he remains to this day, although he sits on the Liberal benches. Toryism, however as interpreted by the Churchills, is often indistinguishable from Radicalism as interpreted by men like John Burns who have the historical insight and a keen sympathy with the traditional glories of their country. He gave Parliament a taste of his quality in his scathing analysis of Mr. Broderick's new army scheme, in May, 1901, and was the only Unionist who voted against it. Of his speech on that occasion, Mr. Massingham, whose "Pictures in Parliament" are perhaps the best contemporary chronicle of proceedings at Westminster, said:

"Its threads were not, of course, woven with the skill that comes of long practice, and here and there were missing stitches. But in its elevation of purpose, its broad conception of national policy, and in the direct movement of its closing sentences, I recall nothing like it since Mr. Gladstone

died. I will make two criticisms upon it—the first is, that it is the speech that should long ago have been delivered from our benches; the second is, that in the years to come its author should be prime minister—I hope Liberal prime minister—of England."

Always a Conservative, Mr. Churchill remains a free trader, and in "this fact" is to be found the cause of his desertion of the Unionist ranks. He could not remain a Jingo and a militarist, so he became a supporter of the Liberals. His first serious administrative speeches were made against financial expenditure and the policy of protection. His first field for trenchment is in the army, he upholds, but he is unalterably opposed to the attempt to convert England to a military power. There are two other questions upon which he differs from the old "Conservative forces"—he has Radical ideas on the Irish question and on education; he is against the National Education Act. It may be said that he is a born demagogue. Perhaps he is; but this young man, demagogue though he may be, before he is thirty, has already won the ear and aroused the enthusiasm of the great majority of his countrymen.



The British Royal Sarcophagus at Frogmore.

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ARNOTT J. MAGURN, Editor

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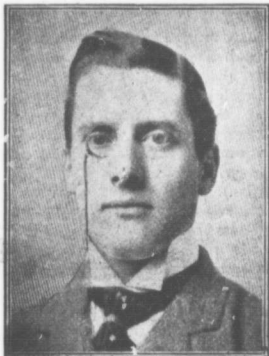
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No. 20

WITH Lord Avebury in the chair, Mr. Courtney inaugurated a renewed campaign on behalf of the proportional representation in a cogent and vigorous speech to an audience in Essex Hall, England. He traced to the system of one-member constituencies much of the demoralization which is now so evident to us, alike among electors and elected. Opinion is misrepresented, e.g., on the basis of votes cast in 1895 and 1900 the Conservative majorities of Great Britain should have been no more than twenty-five and sixteen. Above all, members tied to a party machine and uncertain of the quality of the opinion which elected them, lack the independence to resist either the pressure of the executive or a wave of popular passion. Mr. Courtney's remedy was the creation of large constituencies each returning three, five, or seven members. Shades of thought would be exactly represented. A member would have behind him not merely a bare majority of votes but a coherent body of opinion. The simple but ingenious method of registering second preference would serve in a single election the purposes of a second ballot. Groups in parliament would achieve a desirable measure of independence, and certainly labor would stand to gain. The system has worked well in Denmark, Belgium, some Swiss Cantons, and in a modified form in Japan.

THERE was a remarkable debate in the British House of Commons the other day about Mr. Austen Chamberlain's new Lottery Loan. To the objection that this essentially Levantine method has not been adopted since Pitt's time Mr. Chamberlain said that he had three recent precedents—a Turkish loan, an Egyptian loan, and a Greek loan. No one is surprised

that the Government of Egypt should resort to lottery bonds. Perhaps it is necessary in that part of the world to popularize debt reduction by associating it with gambling. The serious thing is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer adopted the Turco-Greek dodge in order to make his issue more attractive, to borrow more cheaply and pay a lower rate of interest for accommodation. What is the result? The lowest rate at which the comparativ-



Mr. Austen Chamberlain.

ely small amount of 10,000,000 can be borrowed by the Government of Great Britain after ten years of Unionist finance is 3 1/8 per cent. And in reply to Mr. Buxton the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared 'that if he had made a large issue of Consols, still more if he had attempted to make a small issue of entirely new stock, he would have depressed the price of Consols and borrowed upon terms certainly not more advantageous than those he had obtained.'

An Imperial Propaganda.

In the May issue of the British Empire Review there is an article entitled "The Proposed Imperial Council of Advice" written by Herbert Samiel, M. P. The movement for the French restoration has been carried on usually in the drawing room of some of the Bourbon ladies whose zeal for the Monarchy outruns any regard for the Republic. In England there is a group in whose veins the same royalist blood runs and who are endeavoring to spread a propaganda looking to Imperial Federation or a centralized empire power controlled in London.

The article in question reads as follows:

During the last two years private meetings have been held of a group of politicians, civil servants, and publicists of distinction, brought together by Sir Frederick Pollock, whose deliberations have resulted in the proposals for the establishment of an Imperial Council, which has attracted widespread attention. In the columns of this Review and elsewhere Mr. W. P. Reeves also has urged the advantages of such a measure. In the House of Commons during the present session efforts have been made by several members, though hitherto without success, to find in the tangle of parliamentary business some opportunity for a debate on this scheme. At this moment a large body of informed opinion is concentrated in support of these proposals as the next practicable step in the improvement of Imperial organization.

Similar in their outline to those made by the Imperial Federation League shortly before its dissolution in 1893, they reappear now at a time more propitious. The sense of Imperial unity has gained remarkably in force in recent years. The

movement in favor of preferential tariff has emphasized the desire for the consolidation of the Empire without, as it seems, offering an acceptable means for satisfying that desire. The Federation of Australia welding six states into one, has made more manageable the task to be handled. The establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence has furnished that most effective of answers to those who doubt the practicability of a scheme—the precedent of a similar system at work. And the meeting of a Colonial Conference next year offers an early occasion for its discussion. These factors have contributed to make the time opportune for a definite step in the direction which is indicated. It may not be too sanguine to think that we are perhaps on the eve of a constitutional change of profound importance.

The chief virtue of this proposal under discussion is its tentativeness. It has, indeed, no attraction for those ultra-logical minds who think that no plan for extending joint control over common concerns is worth considering unless it is definite and complete; who are not satisfied unless they can draw up tabulated plans of home and Colonial electoral districts, calculate by ingenious processes the right number of representatives for each division of the Empire, compile elaborate lists of the subjects to be discussed in a federal assembly, and even plan the seating accommodation in a nobler Parliament House at some new Imperial centre, and located in the province of Saskatchewan. The movement for the unity of the Empire has outlived these ambitious dreams of youth. It is older, humbler, more patient and more practical.

The plan which now holds the field has

three essential elements. First, a Committee should be established to advise the Cabinet in dealing with matters of Imperial concern, its members a small number of Cabinet ministers and a small number of Colonial representatives. Second, it should be a permanent standing committee meeting whenever occasion required. Third, its functions should be consultative and advisory, and not executive. Everything else is optional.

Should the form be given to it of a committee of the Privy Council? Sir Frederick Pollock holds that this would accord with historical precedent and give to a new body, the dignity of age. Mr. Reeves thinks that the Colonies would dislike such a connection, and would be unfavorably prejudiced by it. Both would probably agree that the question is one of form rather than one of substance, and that, if need be, the committee might first be established as an independent body, the advisability of connecting it with the Privy Council being left for later consideration.

Who should be the Colonial representatives? Mr. Reeves holds that they should be the Premiers. Mr. Sanford Evans has urged in this Review that Colonial Ministers appointed for to deal with external affairs would be "the only effective delegates." But there is no reason for uniformity. The need is that each colony should feel, and that the Imperial Government should recognize, that Colonial views were authoritatively represented on the committee or council, or it might be left to each to decide what kind of representation it would prefer. There would be less symmetry, but no real disadvantage if, when the council was appointed, it was found that Canada had nominated for membership her High Commissioner, Australia her Minister for External Affairs, New Zealand her Premier, with the Agent-General for South Africa a representative chosen ad hoc.

Which of the members of the Cabinet should serve on the council? Probably the Prime Minister and the Secretaries for the Colonies and for India would be permanent members; but on many occa-

sions the attendance of the Foreign Secretary would be required; sometimes that of the War Minister or the First Lord of the Admiralty; or even, in a question such as that of reforming the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council or of unifying the Patent Laws were under discussion, the presence of the Lord Chancellor or the President of the Board of Trade would be necessary. The attendance of Ministers would doubtless vary with the subjects on the agenda.

Sir Frederick Pollock suggests that ex-Ministers who have been members of the Imperial Council, and "ex-Premiers of Colonies whose services happen to be available" should be invited to attend. It is a proposition that appears to many to be of doubtful advantage, threatening friction, either imposing on leaders of the Opposition a share in the responsibility for measures for which they may disapprove, or else hampering the energies of a Government by giving to its political opponents something of the nature of a veto on its acts. But this also solvetur ambulando and if the Imperial representatives on the first council were limited to Ministers of the day, the question whether they should continue their membership on a change of Government might be left to the combined wisdom of themselves and their successors. Only those who have had experience of office can properly decide a point of this nature.

It has been asked whether a merely consultative council would find sufficient work to occupy its energies. In considering foreign relations where they touch Colonial interests, in dealing with such questions as defence (in its broad aspects) merchant shipping, copyright, patents, marriage laws, postage, cables, in elaborating the plan for the reformed Imperial Court of Appeals, which is so urgently needed, in establishing sub-committees on commissions of inquiry into these and similar matters, the Council is sure to have at hand no lack of opportunities for usefulness with the probability of further extensions of its activities as the new problems arise which the progress of the world is always evolving. But, like any other committee,

it must adjust its meetings to its work. If there is much to do, it meets often; if there is little to do, it meets seldom.

All these matters then, are separate from the essential elements in the scheme, and may be settled as they arise in such manner as practical convenience requires. The point of importance is to get started a council, permanent, consultative, confidential when need be, informal in its deliberations, on which the representatives of the home government may meet and discuss with the accredited spokesmen of the Colonies. A method of extending to the Colonies a larger share in the formation of the Imperial policy by which it must be bound, without at the same time imposing on them increased burdens, it should appeal to Colonists of all parties. A means of promoting the unity of the Empire by

infusing into the central authority an element drawn from the outlying self governing systems, it should be acceptable both to Conservatives and to Liberals at home. And if from this council there should be evolved in later times some constitution for the Empire more definite and more commanding, the process must be in harmony with the methods by which in the past the genius of the British people has created our institutions. When Lord Holland, a century ago, was called by Murat the King of Naples to provide him with a constitution, he answered, "Provide a constitution! You might as well ask me to build a tree! It will be enough if in our day we may be permitted to plant a seed which contains within itself a latent power of future growth.

Imperial Platitudes.

THE Saturday Review of England thinks that the Governor General of Canada, in his public addresses, should strike a business note instead of as the paper terms it, "imperial platitudes". This would seem to mean that Earl Grey should canvass us for money towards the support of "Tommy Atkins", and the senior service. Well, the Governor General is paid a salary of \$50,000 a year to discharge certain well understood duties, and not to promote the bank account of John Bull. In reality these "imperial platitudes" amount to really the same thing. They are what the Westminster Gazette termed "the inflation of sentiment", which is a preliminary necessary in the creation of a sentiment which must precede in order to justify the voting of supplies.

The question whether Canada shall contribute to the army and navy of another

country is a political question, to be settled by the government and parliament of Canada. The policy of the Laurier administration is the same as was the policy of Sir Charles Tupper on this question, against handing our taxes over to another government to spend. The present government prefers to make the expenditure within its own jurisdiction and under the direction of its own officers. It has taken over the fortifications at Halifax and Esquimaux and will spend a million or two a year in maintaining these fortifications so as to relieve the British government of the charge. Canada trains 40,000 militiamen every year and is building railways across the continent affording to the British government additional routes between England and India. In these and other ways Canada may be able to satisfy the people of Great Britain that she is doing her share.

An Expert on the Railway Rate Issue.

PRESIDENT SPENCER, of the Southern Railway, recently delivered an address before the Traffic Club of Pittsburg, which the Railway World regards as "one of the clearest and most forcible expressions of the attitude of the railroads toward the governmental rate making issue that has been made," and one that can be taken as representing the general



Sir Wm Van Horn

views of the railway interests on the question. The fact that the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce is now hearing what the railway presidents have to say in regard to federal regulations of railroad rates adds timeliness to the address. President Roosevelt, in his message to Con-

gress in December, announced that, "the rebate, the secret contract, the private discrimination, must go," and that "the highways of commerce must be kept open to all on equal terms." The owners and managers of the railroads, Mr. Spencer says, zealously support him in this declaration of purpose, but in favoring the enactment of legislation which aids in accomplishing this purpose, there is a danger, he thinks, which they may suffer from "unwise and unfair regulation."

The Townsend railway rate bill, which passed the United States House at the last session, contained, according to Mr. Spencer, "not a single provision for dealing with those or kindred abuses, nor was any bill presented or suggested which could be construed as having that most desirable end in view." The President thought it undesirable, if not impracticable, at present, to give the Interstate Commerce Commission the authority to fix railway rates, yet, Mr. Spencer declares, every bill which has been presented in Congress looking to granting increasing powers to the commission would, if enacted into law, do the very thing that the President regarded as undesirable. Mr. Spencer goes on to discuss the point:

"Such enactments would not be, regulation. They would mean incipient, if not final control of the sources of revenue of all the carriers, and that, it is safe to say, the President never intended.

"They might easily mean the taking of property or the diminution of its value without due process of law, or without compensation to the owners. The effect of such regulation undoubtedly would be

the curtailment of future railway construction and improvements, not only by reason of the impairment of railway credit, but also from the unwillingness of investors to own or to enlarge properties, the revenues of which would be under governmental or political control and the expenses still be subject to the uncertainties of industrial conditions.

"The Townsend bill provided that a rate once fixed by the commission should continue in force indefinitely, unless changed by the commission or by the court. Under such law, all rates would, in time, become commission's rates, and the functions of railway managers in adjusting rates to meet commercial conditions, and in extending the sphere of usefulness of the transportation system of the country, would, step by step, come to an end. Slow but steady paralysis would creep into the industrial arteries through which the blood of commerce flows, and the transportation system would thus become numb and rigid. The present activities of railway managers would be eliminated as an agency in the intelligent development of the resources of the country. Rates would soon be machine made only, and industrial and commercial centres, now acknowledging no bounds for the ultimate distribution of their products, would find themselves operating in narrower and narrower zones, and circumscribed by governmental edicts as to where their wares should go."

The charges that rates are extortionate, are described by Mr. Spencer as based on "garbled statistics, and inflammatory generalities, appealing to popular prejudice." He declares that the "rates in this country are only from one-half to one-third of those in countries with which the producers of the United States must compete in the markets of the world," and that in eighteen years the Interstate Commerce Commission "has not succeeded in establishing in the courts a single case of rates unreasonable in themselves." And, again, the charge of "unreasonable and unjustly discriminatory rates between localities is denied by Mr. Spencer. "Out of the average of less than two cases per annum, or thirty-five cases in eighteen years," he

says, "the judgment of the commission has been reversed by the courts in all but two."

One reason assigned for granting specific rate-making powers to the commission is that of long delays incurred in deciding cases. The Elkins Law of 1903, which was intended to do away with all rebates and unjust discrimination and to secure rates uniform to all, was intended to expedite court proceedings instituted by the commission, but as yet, Mr. Spencer, says, there has been no indictment or prosecution of a single individual under the terms of that law. "If the passage of that law," he asks, "with its drastic remedies, and its almost summary methods of procedure, does not expedite the trial of offenders against the Interstate Commerce Law, what can be the effect of any additional legislation for similar ends?"

Mr. Spencer then presents what he calls a simple, direct, and effective method of dealing with the question: "If further legislation be necessary—and I do not say that it is not—let it be given the direction pointed out by the evils calling for correction, and along logical, not experimental lines for the remedying of these evils.

"Draw the distinction broadly and unmistakably between punishment for crime or misdemeanor, on the one hand, and the unnecessary and unwise governmental or paternal interference with legitimate and legal exercise of individual endeavor, on the other.

"Separate widely the functions of Government which detect, and arraign, and prosecute, from those which sit in judgment upon complaints and offences against the law.

"Strengthen the laws in condemnation of rebates, secret devices, and unjust discriminations to any extent that may be found possible and provide, if such further provision be necessary, for the prompt arraignment and prosecution of offenders of the law in the duly constituted courts of the country, and for the unsparing punishment of those who are found to be guilty. If there are such offenders in the railway fraternity, their offences should be exposed and punished, but it is un-American and

unfair, not to say outrageous, because it is said there are such, that every manager and every president and director, shall be subject to indiscriminate public condemnation, and that the innocent investors must have their property jeopardized, and their rights infringed because those to whom the prosecution of the law is entrusted, fail to find the offender and, to punish him. . . .

"In a word—stop those abuses drastically, but avoid action which affects savings put into railroads in good faith; avoid legislation which might impair service and efficiency and reduce the wages of our 1,800,000 employees, for to the wage-earners alone among that number now go over half of the gross expenses of the American railroads."



A cartoon printed during the Gamey Investigation, showing the two judges trying to stew the truth out of a very mixed broth. Mr. Gamey has forced the Whitney Government to put through the Legislature a resolution expunging from the Journals of the House the resolution of two years ago condemning him. The printed copies of the Journals are in this office and it is a curious question what step the legislature could take to obliterate a portion of our volume. The resolution may flatter Mr. Gamey, but "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."

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About Eclipse Expeditions.

THAT the money expended in sending parties to remote lands to observe total solar eclipses would be better invested in equipping permanent astronomical stations, is the opinion of Prof. E. C. Pickering of Harvard. After stating that it is not the present policy of Harvard University to equip eclipse expeditions, Professor Pickering went on to say:

"The experience of the last thirty years does not seem to me to justify the sums invested in eclipse expeditions. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent in apparatus and traveling expenses, and what is there to show for it? Nothing in the remotest degree adequate to the expenditure. Previous to the starting of an expedition there is a great outcry about possible discoveries of immense importance to science. When the event is over the telegraph reports, perhaps, that at the moment of totality clouds unfortunately obscure the sun, entirely frustrating the plans of the observers. Or perhaps the news comes that the weather was perfect, everything propitious, and vast results may be expected. We wait open-mouthed for further disclosures. Alas! that is all we ever hear of those vast results!

"Of course the astronomers have had a nice little outing. And, of course, too, there was a chance of important discoveries. I am not discounting that chance. Neither have I the slightest quarrel with those who pursue eclipses, so long as they do not hoodwink anybody into donating money upon false expectations. The Lick Observatory is this year sending out three equipped expeditions, with the definite purpose of settling the vexed question of

an inter-Mercurial planet. They go at the expense of Mr. Crocker, a wealthy Californian who, having financed eclipse parties before has his eyes wide open to the risk of failure. The Harvard Observatory has loaned them valuable apparatus and wish them all possible success. But for itself, it can not reconcile it with its corporate conscience to spend its trust funds upon the chance of discoveries. I myself have not gone out to observe an eclipse for thirty years past, except in 1900, when I went to Georgia at my own expense. I would much rather see the money which is sunk in those expeditions invested in a fixed station somewhere; I am confident that it would yield larger results."

A survey of eclipse literature has failed to show that any other astronomer shares Professor Pickering's skepticism about the value of eclipse expeditions; or, at least, if any others share his opinions, he does not seem to have intrusted his views to print. Most astronomers do not even take the trouble to discuss the question. Everywhere there is the tacit assumption that there is no knowing what important results may accrue from the faithful efforts of eclipse chasers; everywhere the tacit assumption that the efforts of past expeditions have been crowned with abundant success. To be sure, when a layman tries to simmer down the reports of observers, he does not come upon anything which to his untechnical eye seems at all revolutionary. The principal result seems to be the securing of fine photographs of the corona—those "souvenirs" of which Professor Pickering speaks with such open contempt.

But astronomers go cheerfully on devising new apparatus to photograph eclipses, and spectroscopes to assist in determining the chemical nature of the corona, and bolometers to measure its heat and govern-

ments go on organizing expeditions, quite as if the question of the righteousness of venturing public moneys upon uncertainties had never been raised.



SERGE J. WITTE

One of the Czar's strongest advisers.

Pere Lacombe.

ONE of the old time pioneer explorers, bravers of the wilderness of our great West, and venerated advance agents of the Christian religion. Pere Lacombe, perhaps the last of the French explorer priests, is the subject of a character sketch by Miss Agnes C. Laut. Pere Lacombe, who has been a distinguished, unique figure for the past three quarters of a century in the annals of the great Northwest of the United States and Canada has just retired to a little home at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Few maker of history, says Miss Laut, have, "by the mere lifting of a hand, been able to prevent massacres that might have wiped out the frontier of half a continent."

Few leaders have cheered half a hundred men to victory against a thousand through pitchy darkness, in the confusion of what was worse than darkness—panic. And not every hero of victory can be the hero of defeat—a hero, for instance, to the extent of standing siege by scourge, with three thousand dying and dead of the plague, men fleeing from camp pursued by a phantom death, wolves skulking past the wind blown tent flaps unmolested, none remaining to bury the dead but the one man whose hands are ever busy with the dying.

Father Lacombe is a priest, but to call him a priest would be misleading.

In these days of sentimental religion, with the abolition of the devil and a pious turning up of the whites of one's eyes to an attenuated Deity, priesthood is sometimes associated with a sort of anæmic goodness—the man who sits in a cushioned study chair. But Father Lacombe's goodness is of the red blood type, that knows how to deal with men who think in terms of the clinched fist.

Miss Laut recounts, in her spirited style,

Father Lacombe's work among the Blackfeet during a plague of smallpox. She tells about the terrible experience suffered by the venerable father during the winters of '68, '69, and '70, when the Blackfeet were attacked by their combined enemies—the Cree, Assiniboine, and Sautaux Indians. It was a terrible battle, and in it the brave priest was wounded while attempting to advance, holding a cross, to bring about a parley with the enemy. One illustration of the sweetness and vigor of the old man's character is given by Miss Laut. We quote it in her words:

Once, on such a journey southward over interminable snows, Father Lacombe had camped with his guide on the edge of a woods. Both men were dead tired, their snowshoes dragged heavily. Supper over, they spread their snow-lagged garments to dry before the fire, prepared beds of spruce branches and sat listening to that strange unearthly silence of the snow padded plains. The dogs crouched round asleep. The night grew black as ink foreboding storm. An uncanny muteness fell over the two. They knew they were eighty miles from a living soul; and the cold was terrific. There was no sound but the crackle of the fire, and an occasional splinter of frost split trees outside. Suddenly the guide pricked up his ears with dilated eyes intent. Faint, more like a breath of storm than a voice came a muffled wail. Then, silence again, of very death. The men looked at each other, but didn't say anything. It was too kind of silence where you can hear your breath. Half an hour passed. There is no use of pretending. The ozone of northern latitudes at midnight, eighty miles from a living soul, can prick your nerves and send tickles down your spine. You become aware that solitude is positively palpable. And

it came again out of the frost muffled woods—the long sighing wail.

"Alex, do you hear that?"

"Yes," but he didn't want to.

"What 's that?"

"Hare seized by owl."

"You think—that?"

"Yes," but he thought it weakly.

"Your hare has a human voice, Alex."

But Alex, who was visibly chattering, became voluble. Of course, it was a hare. He'd often remarked the resem— But the words died in a gulp of fright, and the guide got himself to bed in haste with the blanket robe over his head.

"Alex, your hare has a long life, bien! Listen! Do you hear? Get up! Some one has need of us. I'm going to see."

In vain he explained to the priest that the voice came from the body of some brave buried among the branches of the trees in there, who was calling for the things his relatives had forgotten to place with the corpse.

"Then, I'll go alone," said Lacombe, "but you keep your gun ready; and if there is danger, I'll call you."

And surely, says the narrator, from a prudent point of view it was rash to follow a vague voice into unknown woods blanketed black with the thickness of intense frost. What was terrifying was that the groans seemed nearer than his own hands and feet—yet he could find nothing! Suddenly he was aware of the warmth of cinders under his moccasins; and stooping felt a voice in his very face. A human form lay wrapped in a buffalo robe across the dying camp fire.

"Speak! What are you?" he demanded.

"A woman with her child—lost I could tramp no longer—my feet are frozen."

Calling the guide, the two men carried

woman and infant to their teepee. She was little more than a child herself, and had evidently been outrageously beaten. Both feet required amputation. The priest learned that she had been cast off by her Cree husband, and had gone forth from the camp to kill both herself and the child; but at the sound of its cry her courage failed her. She could not do the act, and marched on and on, day after day, till her frozen feet could march no further. Then, wrapping the child in her warmest clothing, she had gathered it close in her arms, spread the buffalo robe over herself and laid down to die. But to this Hagar of the wilderness came a visitant of mercy. When Father Lacombe wakened in the morning he found that the guide had plied the woman with restoratives all night, wrapped her in robes, and placed her on the dog sleigh. The guide then hitched himself with the dogs to pull. Father Lacombe fastened the steering pole behind to push; and so they took her to the mission house hundreds of miles distant. On the way they came up with the Cree husband who had abandoned her. The man was dumbfounded at the apparition.

"What!" he blustered. "I don't want this wife! You'd have done much better to have minded your own business and left her alone where she was, to die."

For just a second, the Man in Father Lacombe got the better of the Priest. "I think if that Cree had waited he would have received all he needed.

"You miserable beast!" thundered Lacombe. "You don't think as much of your child as a dog of its pups! Get into that tent this minute and hide your dishonorable head, or—I will find some one to take care of her."