

WALL PAPER.

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The Watchman.

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1889.

The Question of the Hour.

The great mass meeting of citizens in Toronto opposed to the Jesuit Bill and French aggression, and a similar meeting in Montreal, with the resolutions that have been passed all over the land in unqualified condemnation of the servile attitude of both political parties at Ottawa on the question at issue, clearly indicate that the agitation has taken firm hold of the best instincts of the people, and that when the time comes the honest convictions of the electorate will be recorded without fear, favor or affection for either of the political parties, both of which are responsible for the unfortunate crisis with which our Dominion is now face to face. Nor is it a matter for surprise that the extreme party press should on this occasion furnish another illustration of the truth of the saying that "the leopard cannot change his spots." The public have so long been accustomed to the partisan discussion of all questions by that portion of the public press that their present experience is accepted as a matter of course. The usual methods are being brought into play in order to draw off the attention of the public from the all important question at issue. The motives of the leaders of the present movement, both lay and clerical, are being impugned; party prejudice is being appealed to; religion is being introduced as a factor in the discussion to poison the minds of one section of the community; in fact, every argument is being employed that can prevent a settlement of the question from a purely patriotic standpoint. The introduction of the religious cry into the discussion is so irrelevant that it ought to be treated as an insult by those whom it is intended to influence. The high character and ability of those who are taking a prominent part in the present movement, coupled with the fact that they belong to both shades of politics, is a sufficient answer to the characteristic innuendoes that are being circulated as to their good faith. To the good sense of the electors is left the settlement of a question in which is involved the peace, unity and prosperity of the Dominion. That they will "rise to the height of this great argument" and give their decision irrespective of aught but the best interests of the country, we firmly believe. That the present French problem, which has grown to such serious dimensions under the Nationalist programme of Mercier, is largely the natural outcome of the long years of subserviency to the Quebec vote of Sir John Macdonald in his management of Dominion affairs, goes without saying. Whether the great undertakings which have been completed for the development of this country could have been successfully carried out with smaller sacrifices to French greed, is another question. The share of the responsibility for the present dangerous crisis in our history remains all the same. We have no desire to lessen that responsibility in the eyes of the public. But to the factious and disloyal policy of the leaders of the reform party of the

Dominion, and of the reform leaders of Ontario, is chargeable the bold aggressiveness of the Mercier regime which has culminated in the passage of the Jesuit Estates bill. The change of the reform cry of forty years against French domination into the Riel agitation; the sanction given to the French Nationalist ideas in the school system of English Ontario; the Mowat-Mercier coalition against the rights of the Dominion and the stability of Confederation, might safely be followed up by the passing of an Act "offensive to the whole Dominion, and against the national life of the whole Dominion," and by the almost solid vote of the representatives of the reform party in support of the allowance of the Act. The sham pretence of the reform leaders that their vote against disallowance was based solely on the ground of provincial rights, is as great an insult to the intelligence of the public as the Act itself. The interpretation of the veto power of the Dominion government by the reform leaders prior to their defeat in 1878, was precisely the same as that of Sir John Macdonald prior to his last sacrifice to French aggression on the Jesuit Estates bill. The frequent exercise of that power during the whole of the Mackenzie regime, and the support of Messrs. Mackenzie and Blake of Sir John Macdonald's disallowance of the New Brunswick School bill, attest the record. No other interpretation is compatible with the existence of Confederation.

Editorial Notes.

In referring to the unpatriotic speech of the Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education, during the late session of the Ontario Legislature, in support of the policy of the Ontario Government in the encouragement given by the Educational Department to the growth of French nationalist ideas in this province, Mr. John Hague, F.R.S.S., in an able article on the subject says:—

"As to the relations of Ontario to the French race, it is surely strange that a Minister of Education knows so little of Canadian history as to tell us that Ontario was colonized or subdued by the industry of the French. This was done by the Minister of Education in his speech in the Legislative Assembly on the 8th of March last. The fact is that this gallant race established a few trading posts here and there, but did not settle on the land, they did not clear farms, build villages or towns or do aught by industry to give them any hold of the province. There are in Ontario about 2,200 hamlets, villages, towns or cities, out of which only sixteen have names indicating a French settlement. There is only one station on the Grand Trunk railway that has a French name, and only one township. It is significant that the westernmost point in the province is Windsor, and the easternmost Lancaster. There is not a public body in Ontario where French is spoken, even in our Legislative Assembly there are not half a dozen members who could follow a French speaker. To set up, then, the claim of historic occupation by the French in Ontario as a reason for perpetuating the division of our people in this province by the use of two languages is to base a mischievous policy upon a gross historic blunder."

Mr. Hague still further deals with Mr. Ross on his Welsh school comparison, as follows:—

"It is, perhaps, well here to point out the irrelevance of the comparison made by Mr. Ross of Welsh schools in Wales to French schools in Ontario. The analogy he drew is so illogical as to be characteristic. 1. Welsh is the national tongue of Wales; French is not the national tongue of Ontario, not even of Canada. 2. The Welsh are not immigrant settlers in Wales: the French are immigrant settlers in Ontario. 3. The Welsh are the vast majority of the people of Wales; the French are a very small minority of the people of Ontario. 4. The Welsh desire to mix freely with the English; the French are sought to be herded apart from the English. 5. IN THE SCHOOLS IN WALES NO WELSH BOOK IS USED, English is "the language of education," but in the French schools in Ontario French books are used, and French is "the language of education."

So that Mr. Ross makes two things to be analogous that in the matter that is sought to be illustrated by the analogy have not one point in common!

Besides the above I have a letter from the master of a large national school in Wales, who has for years been officially in contact with schoolmasters all over the

principality. He writes that, "as to methods adopted for dealing with Welsh scholars there is not a single Welsh book used in the public national school—none whatever. A good school in Wales has everything like a good English school. The text books used in State-aided schools in Wales are all English books."

The appalling railway accident near Hamilton on Sunday last has again drawn the attention of the public to the terrible part which the car stove plays in railway disasters. Fortunately on this occasion the crash was so complete as to prevent, it is believed, any suffering from the fire caused by the stoves. But the accident shows clearly the frightful danger the travelling public are exposed to on account of the car stove, and the urgent necessity there is for immediate and stringent legislation on the subject.

The *Canadian Post* in a lengthy and exceedingly characteristic article last week, in defending the vote of the reform members in support of Sir John Macdonald's course on the Jesuit Bill on the principle of provincial rights, says:—"We are confident the people who elected them will accredit them with an honest and manly adhesion to a principle, and will not hesitate to renew the mandate when the time comes." What about Messrs. Barron, Charlton and the other reformers who voted with Col. O'Brien? Are the electors to condemn them for their desertion of the "vital principle"? Or will the intelligent electorate not be able to see that the reform party have of late years run the "provincial rights" idea to extremes, in direct opposition to their practice when in power, and that their attitude on this question has been simply in keeping with their factious policy of being in all things "agin the government"? "We are confident the people who elected them will accredit" Messrs. Barron, Charlton, et al, on the one side, and Messrs. O'Brien, McCarthy et al, on the other with having risen superior to party in "an honest and manly adhesion to a vital principle," and don't you forget it. This will be the verdict of the people, the *Post's* anxiety for the "party" on the one side, and the *Warder's* concern for the other party on the other, to the contrary notwithstanding.

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1ST JUNE, 1889,

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