

Since our last issue, the news from the North-West has been of a mixed character. For a few days, the indications were that the heart of the rebellion had either fallen out, or had been bought out. In using this language we speak advisedly. The tone of the chief Conservative organ was for several days pitched to that key which forebodes a repetition of that wretched farce, perpetrated by Old To-morrow. Again, we say, we were prepared to learn that he was exclaiming, "Would to God I could catch Riel," to be followed shortly by the information that he was secretly buying that murderer out of the country. Nor do we hesitate to aver that the mysterious mission of Hon. Mr. Royal gave ample ground for such grave suspicions. And the obstinate silence which the Government persists in keeping in reference to its actions in the trouble more than justifies such ugly doubts, for it actually invites and incites them.

The Liberal party, in the person of its leader, Hon. Edward Blake, has been stigmatized as unpatriotic. Sir John himself has endorsed the charge, and throughout the length and breadth of the land, Tory journals have joined in the hue and cry. Now on what grounds is this tremendous charge made? On none, we confidently reply, except it be that Hon. Edward Blake has insisted on the country's right to be kept informed, so far as is consistent, and no farther, with the public interests, on the real state of affairs in the disaffected quarters, and on the Government's course of policy to meet that disaffection. But true to themselves, they who have been the cause of the trouble, wish first to cover up their tracks, and then, as a mere minor consideration, restore peace or at least the semblance of peace. But undoubted as are the magnificent abilities of Hon. Edward Blake and his gallant co-workers, their courage is still less open to challenge. They are not the men to be deterred from doing their duty by any such transparent trick as is the cry of treason issuing from the mouths of those who are themselves traitors to all that does not minister to the lust of power and lucre. To us it seems that the small but gallant opposition at Ottawa is the little leaven left which at no remote day will restore honesty and justice where all is now duplicity and fraud.

Meanwhile, the prospect of a near peace has been darkened by a terrible report that Fort Pitt has been captured, and that two of the Mounted Police have been killed. We most sincerely hope that the tidings are false, for if Fort Pitt has really fallen, it is almost impossible not to believe that the death of two men will turn out to have been a wholesale massacre of the whole of that outpost, together with the settlers who were quartered there.

Where all is darkness, it does not appear to be of much service to point out any one black spot. Still we cannot refrain from directing attention to the strange movements of Lieut. Col. Ouimet. This officer should be at the head of his regiment, now at Calgary. Hon. Mr. Caron, Minister of Militia, indeed stated the other day in the House that he actually was with his men. But as we write, it is certain he is in Ottawa. The Government organs flatly contradict each other as to the cause of this most peculiar procedure. Some say that he is ill, others that business of the most pressing kind has forced him from his post, others again that he is the bearer of a special dispatch from General Middleton, and finally the *Montreal Gazette* affirms that he has left without permission and ought to be court-martialed. A pretty pickle, forsooth. But we shall see.

TREE-PLANTING.

As the season for Tree-planting is close at hand, we feel that a few words from us will not be out of place on this very important subject.

It is plainly shown in the Annual Report on Forestry, compiled by Mr. R. W. Phipps, Forest Conservator, that our Province, is fast becoming stripped of the beautiful woods which, at one time, were not only useful but ornamental, and that if some attention is not paid to Tree-planting, as well as to the preservation of the forests which still exist, in a few years we shall find ourselves living in a prairie country as far as trees are concerned. We have an Act of Parliament, entitled "The Ontario Tree-planting Act," but its provisions seem to be known to but few.

We notice that the Markham and Vaughan Councils are moving on the subject, and we hope to see others follow their example. For the benefit of those unacquainted with the provisions of the Act, and in the hope that other Township or village Councils which are desirous of the blessings of generations to come will take the matter up, we quote Sections 5 and 6 of said Act:—

5. The council of any municipality may pass a By-law for paying out of municipal funds a bonus or premium not exceeding twenty-five cents for each and every ash, basswood, beech, birch, butternut, cedar, cherry chestnut, elm, oak, hickory, maple, pine, sassafras, spruce, walnut, or whitewood tree, which shall, under the provisions of this Act, be planted within such municipality on any highway, or on any boundary line of farms as aforesaid, or within six feet of such boundary.

Such By-law shall further provide for the appointment of an inspector of trees so planted; for their due protection against injury and against removal by any person or persons, including the owner, excepting as authority may be given therefore by special resolution of the council; for the conditions on which bonuses may be paid; and generally for such regulations as are authorized by chapter one hundred and seventy-four of the Revised Statutes of Ontario, section 454 (16).

Printed copies of the said by-law, together with sections four, five, six and seven of this Act, shall be posted throughout the municipality, and all claims made to the council under the provisions of the by-law shall be referred to the inspector to obtain proof of the same and report thereon.

6. The inspector shall make to the council one report for each year, if required so to do, giving the names of all persons entitled to any bonus or premium under the by-law, the number of trees of each species planted, and the amount of bonus or premium to which each person is entitled, and certifying that the distance between any one tree and the tree nearest thereto is not less than thirty feet, that the trees have been planted for a period of three years, and that they are alive, healthy and of good form; and upon the adoption of such report the bonuses or premiums shall be paid.

Let it be remembered that this consideration of tree-planting is not merely one of beauty, but of the most undoubted utility to the whole community. The climatic influence of trees can scarcely be over-estimated. Every effort to make amends for the wholesale destruction of our forests is both prudent and patriotic, and we hope our corporate bodies throughout the County will keep the ball rolling in this direction.

THE BRIBERY VERDICT.

We have purposely refrained from making any comments on the verdict arrived at in the recent trial of Bunting, Meek, Wilkinson, and Kirkland in conspiracy. So great is our respect for the bench, so anxious are we to believe that it is all that it should be, that we prefer to account for any seeming failure of justice to human fallibility rather than impugn by even a breath the honor and probity of our law-administrators. True it is, that, in common with the great bulk of our countrymen, we believed the evidence against the accused of the most convincing character. That it could be broken down, never entered our mind. All the ugly details of that most nefarious plot were vouched for in a way that defied negation. It did seem that not one link was missing in the chain that was to bind them. But the verdict showed differently. Bribery there was, but conspiracy was not proved. And then a yell of triumph burst from the throats of all Torydom. A victory, which was a most shameful defeat, was hailed with a frenzy of joy and congratulation from which we are fain to believe every high-minded Conservative recoiled in disgust. But amidst this mad and bare-faced jubilation it must not be forgotten that henceforth it will be utterly puerile for Conservatives to pretend that they are not completely identified with the plotters. When the 'brawling brood of bribers' were in danger, Conservatives trembled; when an unexpected loop-hole was discovered for an escape, Conservatives rent the sky with mad acclamations. Who now will pretend that had the plot succeeded, Mr. Meredith and his followers and supporters would not joyfully have shared the spoils gained by means at which a black-leg alone would not stand aghast?

In Tuesday's *Globe*, however, appeared a letter from Mr. Thomas West, one of the jurors in the recent trial, and acting foreman. This gentleman drew up the verdict, and he is certainly competent to say what was its exact meaning. We confess that we wish that motives of delicacy had not so long deferred an explanation which even now hurls aside the foul aspersions cast by the *Mail* on the witnesses for the crown. Mr. West states that the charge of bribery was proved beyond cavil, that the jurors so recognized it, but in as much as the charge of conspiracy rested on the evidence of one crown witness who was flatly contradicted by one witness for the defence, they, the jurors were forced to give the defendants the benefit of the doubt. No slur he adds was cast on the witnesses for the prosecution, indeed, their evidence was irrefragable. The single weak spot in the case for the crown was the question of conspiracy. Now this was the indictment. It fell through, and for this accident, behold all Torydom in ecstasies.

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