

General Business.

Miramichi Advance.

CHATHAM, N. B., DECEMBER 24, 1891.

The Mercier Cabinet Dismissed.

Lieut-Governor Angers, of Quebec has dismissed his advisers, and the circumstances under which he has taken the important and unusual step are quite fully stated in the official correspondence which we publish elsewhere, Mr. Mercier—the ex-premier—happens to call himself a liberal, and it is evidently because of that fact that nearly all the liberal papers appear to hold that the governor has done wrong in not condoning the offences of which that gentleman and some of his colleagues have been guilty, for he had, constitutionally, no choice other than to either acquiesce in their conduct, dismiss them, or tender his own resignation. It is pitiful, and a striking illustration of the low level to which partyism has dragged many prominent papers, to find them thus practically defending public plunderers and holding that the representative of the Crown—after they had ignored him in his official capacity, given him assurances of their integrity which were false, and violated their most important constitutional obligations—should continue to preserve with them the relationship of a governor of a British province and his advisers. Governor Angers had the power to dismiss the corrupt members of his Cabinet and he would have disgraced his high office had he not exercised his prerogative as he has done. Mr. Mercier, however, has made a study of playing upon the sentimentality of the impressionable people of Quebec, who, as a whole, are perhaps more easily imposed upon by such harlequinades of politico-religious gymnastics as have been practiced by the late premier, than those of any other country in America, at least, and this fact seems to give substance to an impression that the people, when appealed to, may forget the dishonest administrator and be carried away by the glare and tinsel in which he has invested a large proportion of the public money which he has wrongfully appropriated. Should this happen, the province of Quebec will add another page to its already unenviable record as the "black sheep" of the Dominion family and discourage the acceptance of its governorship by self-respecting men, desirous of maintaining the dignity of the Crown and vindicating the good name of the province.

It is evident that Mr. Mercier is determined not to submit quietly to the punishment he so well deserves. It will be seen by his letter to Governor Angers that he "talks back" in a fashion that is not only independent, but suggestive of audacity and recklessness that easily merge into impertinence. He mixes the Deity's name up in the controversy with a facility quite natural, no doubt, to one of the exalted orators in such matters which he imagines he has acquired; although the circumstances in which his disgrace had its genesis, and the environment of the case, from its earliest stages to the present time, were apparently the outcome of intents and objects upon which no blessing from on high could have been invoked with any degree of consistency or sincerity. He is, apparently, a master of sophistry; and the adroitness with which he misrepresents facts and juggles with inductions indicates that he depends more upon working upon the prejudices of the ignorant in the struggle that is before him, than the merits of his cause or any respect he has shown in the past for either the traditions of the empire or genuine regard for its sovereignty, against whom, while pretending in his letter to hold her up as a defender of constitutional rights, he, nevertheless, utters a threatening growl, which will, of course, not render him the less popular amongst his sympathizers.

Let us hope, however, that Quebec has seen the last of the Mercier regime. The rule of such men and those by whom he has surrounded himself in the historic province, would be financially ruinous to a country of independent revenue resources, to say nothing of its demoralizing effects upon public virtue and tendency to create contempt for constitutional government. The effort of Quebec to purge itself of the disgrace of the Mercier gang will be watched throughout the world with unusual interest, and if the people of that province shall prove unequal to the duty devolving upon them in the elections that must take place, there will be a general feeling in every other part of the Dominion that every member of the confederacy is compelled to share the odium of association with those who compromise the honor of the country.

New Cabinet.

Of the new government of the Province of Quebec composed of C. B. DeBoucherville, premier and president of the council; T. C. Casgrain, attorney general; J. S. Hall, treasurer; E. J. Flynn, commissioner of crown lands; G. A. Nantel, commissioner of public works; Louis Beaudin, commissioner of agriculture; L. P. Pelletier, provincial secretary; L. R. Masson, L. O. Tailon, J. Mackintosh, ministers without portfolio.

A New Process.

A new process for manufacturing political ammunition—or, rather, the adaptation of an old idea to that work—is now being used by the party papers. A correspondent invents a story concerning some prominent public man and causes it to be published. Then, the papers of the party in whose supposed interest the invention is made solemnly direct attention to the fact that the thing is evidently true because the person concerning whom it has been said does not deny it. And, yet that kind of news passes current

quite as readily as if it were a legitimate article.

Not Very Patriotic.

Our former good-natured contemporary—the St. John Globe—has of late manifested much ill-temper. It is so spiteful as to put the heading "Preparing for the Kingston election" over the following Ottawa despatch:—

Three convicts, named Hayes, Hollingsworth and O'Leary, who were sentenced to five years imprisonment in Kingston penitentiary for robbing mail, will be released on Christmas eve. They have served two years and were formerly mail clerks. Because these men were in Kingston penitentiary, it does not follow that they belong to that electoral district and, in any case, their names could not possibly appear on any Canadian electoral list. But, after all, it is not a Canadian electoral list that is the business for a Canadian paper to work of creating incorrect impressions, to the detriment of the country in the minds of strangers?—

You Never Can Tell.

Some of the papers are rendering assistance to the lawyers and courts in trying cases of more or less local interest, and the results—so far as the general public is concerned—is to make the facts as clear as mud. One story appears good until one hears the other fellow's interpretation of it, while the declarations, affidavits, pleadings, replications and other luxuries in which the respective clients are interested and uncertainly, so that life seems too short for the general public to attempt to justify the ordinary reporter in giving the time and study such abstruse subjects require for their proper and equitable adjustment. Besides, after the papers pronounce judgment, the judges have an awkward habit of deciding quite differently, for these gentlemen of the bench make a practice of patiently waiting to hear all the evidence, which the papers dealing with such matters think it unnecessary to do. Lawyers generally demonstrate their ability to take care of themselves, however their clients may fare, and it seems to us safest to let them fight their own battles and leave the judges to decide their cases.

The Politicians.

The Halifax Herald says:— "The petition against the returns of Sir Adolphe Caron was, on Saturday, dismissed with costs. The same day a judgment was given in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia that renders invalid the petitions against the returns of Sir John Thompson, Hon. Mr. Tupper, Mr. McIl, (Annapolis), Mr. Kaulback, and Mr. White (Shelburne). It is also announced in the Montreal papers of Friday, that the petition against Mr. Frechette, Conservative member for Megantic is dead. This leaves only thirteen government supporters to 32 Liberals on the list."

The True Issue.

The Montreal Witness, the leading Liberal paper of Montreal, referring to the dismissal of Mercier, says:— "The constitutional question is the secondary one in this contest; the main question is, shall a corrupt and disreputable minister, who has simply played at ducks and drakes with the resources and credit of the province, and has allowed bootleggers and toll-takers to grab provincial moneys by the scores and hundreds of thousands of dollars, while finding it difficult to place loans in Europe, thus made necessary, be sent back to power to continue that game? If the Ottawa Government is to blame for an unconstitutional course on the part of Mr. Angers, as so many Liberals hold, punish that Government by all means. But the present duty of all honest men, whether Liberal or Conservative, whether English or French, is to rebuke and punish the booting Government of Quebec."

QUEBEC!

The Political Heather on Fire. GOVERNOR ANGERS DISMISSES HIS ADVISERS.

HE CHARGES MR. MERCIER WITH DECEPTION AND DECLARES THE DEBILITATED TO BE DEMAND BY THE DIGNITY AND NECESSARY FOR THE SAFETY OF THE PROVINCE AND INTERESTS OF THE PROVINCE.

MR. MERCIER IS DEFIANT AND MOUNTS THE FEIGNING OF THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS! BOODLE AND BRAVADO DEFY THE GOVERNOR AND PROCLAIM THEIR RIGHT TO LICENSE IN THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY.

Premier Mercier's government has been dismissed by the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec. The following documents are interesting reading.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, QUEBEC, 16th Dec., 1891.

Honorable Honor Mercier, Prime Minister, Quebec.

Sir,—Touching the matter of the Baie des Chaleurs Railway Company, I have received an interim report of the majority of the Royal Commission, Honorable Judge Jette, being appointed from participating therein by the sudden and serious illness under which he is laboring, and which will prevent him from undertaking all assiduous work for 15 days to come. This document, which is forwarded to His Honor A. R. Angers, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec, etc., etc.

We the undersigned commissioners have the honor to submit the following report:—"The serious illness of the president of the commission, rendering absolutely impossible for an indefinite time his completion of the duties of the final report, we are compelled to suspend that report. However we understand that your honor has a right to be informed as soon as possible in the public interest of the result of our deliberations. His honor Judge Jette has apprised your honor that his state of health rendered it impossible for him to participate in any report for the present. Conscious of the grave responsibility assumed by us in accepting the difficult charge which we undertake in this respect, it is a strict duty for us under the circumstances to transmit to you without further delay a summary of the conclusions at which we have arrived, with the understanding, however, reserving such for the final report. During the negotiations with J. J. McDonald, and afterwards during those with A. M. Thom, with whom C. N. Armstrong had connected himself, Picaud acted as intermediary between the parties interested and the members of the Royal Commission. Both McDonald and Armstrong were persuaded that Picaud's intervention was necessary to enable them to succeed. The bargain entered into between Armstrong and Picaud about March 19, 1891, by which the sum of \$100,000 was promised and afterwards paid to Picaud was fraudulent, contrary to public order and an absolute violation of the Provincial Treaty, and it was effected under a pretext wearing all the outward appearance of legality. The Government, on April 21, 22, 1891, and the letters of credit, issued April 22, had nothing before them to establish that the persons with whom they were supposed to be transacting were legally bound and obliged to carry out the conditions of the act 54 Victoria, chap. 88. The order in council, which is based on the reorganization of the Baie des Chaleurs Railway Company, and yet such reorganization had not taken place when the letters of credit were irregularly issued

without your honor's knowledge. In this connection we refer to the "debits," which occur in sub section 7 of section 1 of the 54 Vic., chap. 88, are replaced by the words, "actual debits," an alteration not made by the Government. Armstrong's claim as shown by exhibit 3 of the record amounted to the sum of \$293,493.82. It was not due, and consequently not payable, until the date of the order in council. The sudden and unexpected appearance of this claim after the passing of the order in council, and the fact that the amount of the public treasury appears to have caused a great deal of embarrassment, trouble and anxiety to Hon. Mr. Garneau, and without the aid of the public treasury credit would not have been issued.

We are of opinion that Mr. Garneau, in the course of the entire transaction with the Hon. Mr. Picaud, acted with the utmost carelessness, but that he was in good faith and believed that he was acting in the interest of the public. The fact of Hon. Mr. Robitoux having in his possession Picaud's notes for \$200,000, endorsed by P. Valliere, and to which was attached a receipt for the same, issued by Jean Christophe Langelier, commissioner in the Baie des Chaleurs affair, and the letter of Cashier Webb to Cashier Bonquet, dated March 19, 1891, are all facts which when the letter of credit for \$100,000 would be paid by the Government, together with the attempt made by Mr. Robitoux to check the check of Picaud, constitute very compromising facts for that gentleman. There is no evidence, however, that Mr. Robitoux was in any way connected with the \$100,000 in question as he moreover declared before us. Out of this sum of \$100,000, Picaud at different times paid to Hon. Mr. Mercier the sum of \$25,000, and divers sums of money amounting in all to \$30,201.23, from which it appears to be probable that a sum of \$2,572.76 should be deducted. Mr. Picaud also received from the Hon. Mr. Mercier the sum of \$25,000 in all, discounted for political purposes, were paid by Mr. Picaud out of the Baie des Chaleurs money. That debt, as established by Mr. Mercier's own evidence, was not contracted with the form I understand that the responsibility would be equally shared between the signers if endorsed without recit, and the Hon. Mr. Mercier, as well as the Hon. Mr. Picaud, were both equally responsible. Although the payment by Mr. Picaud of these notes appears to have been made in good faith, and without the knowledge of the undersigned, it does not less constitute the discharge of a debt personal to each of them and when the Hon. Mr. Picaud was in possession of the proceeds of a note for \$20,000 sent to him by Mr. Mercier, and Mr. Mercier were at the moment so discredited on the same day at the Baie des Chaleurs, it is not surprising that the Commissioner Levesque in favor of Armstrong was annexed.

It is evident that there is no real contradiction existing between Mr. Mercier's statement to you in his explanations as reported in the official correspondence, and the facts as stated in his report. In his reply to your Honor's memorandum of Sept. 7th last Mr. Mercier expresses himself in the following terms:—"At the time of the meeting of the Executive Council on the same day (May 15) Mr. Picaud purchased by means of a check drawn on the same account a bill of exchange in favor of the Hon. Mr. Mercier for \$20,000 (representing 25,000 francs). The evidence of Mr. Lafrance, cashier at Quebec, pages 77 and 78, establishes that the bill of exchange from the proceeds of a note of Picaud's, which was endorsed by Mr. Valliere and guaranteed by one of the checks mentioned by your Honor, was not cashed by Mr. Mercier, but that the amount was raised by means of one of the blank notes which I had left behind me and naturally with the intention of myself taking up the paper in order to procure the proceeds of the bill for personal use. I affirm further that when I asked for this amount I ignored for a long time afterwards that it was the proceeds of a note of Picaud's. The Railway had taken place, and that I only learned some time after my return to Canada, through the report of the Senate proceeding in favor of the new route, that Mr. Picaud had obtained a sum of \$100,000, or any other sum. Messrs. Mercier and Picaud both declared that this sum had been called for by a letter written in the early days of May, the money to be raised by the Hon. Mr. Picaud before Mr. Mercier had left with Mr. Picaud before his departure for Europe. The letter replied by forwarding the draft or by advising him that the proceeds of the bill were not to be sent to him. Mr. Mercier did not state to your Honor as he declared before us that he had left this \$20,000 check in Picaud's hands, but that he had left it in the hands of Mr. Mercier's personal use. We regret also that the following letters were not produced: Mr. Garneau's letter to Mr. Mercier and the latter's reply to Mr. Garneau; Mr. Mercier's letter to Mr. Picaud; Mr. Picaud's letter to Mr. Garneau; and the correspondence between them in relation to the bill of exchange referred to in his evidence. It is not proved that Mr. Mercier knew of the existence of the bargain between Armstrong and Picaud, and that he was in any way connected with it, or that he was in any way connected with the fact that the Hon. Mr. Picaud had obtained a sum of \$100,000, or any other sum. The Hon. Mr. Picaud, however, declared that he had obtained this sum of \$100,000, or any other sum, through the report of the Senate proceeding in favor of the new route, that Mr. Picaud had obtained a sum of \$100,000, or any other sum. Messrs. Mercier and Picaud both declared that this sum had been called for by a letter written in the early days of May, the money to be raised by the Hon. Mr. Picaud before Mr. Mercier had left with Mr. Picaud before his departure for Europe. The letter replied by forwarding the draft or by advising him that the proceeds of the bill were not to be sent to him. 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