

CURRENT EVENTS.

CANADIAN JUSTICE.—Mr. Justice Murphy, of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, added the punishment of whipping to a period of ten years imprisonment in sentencing William Bagley, who with four other bandits from the United States, had robbed a bank at Nanaimo, B.C. In pronouncing sentence the learned Judge observed that criminal procedure in Canada was simple and swift and endeavoured to be certain. Canada was not to be made the happy hunting grounds for those who made crime a profession across the border. "The Courts of British Columbia intend to deal drastically with would-be murderers—not that we seek vengeance, but that we intend to demonstrate that here in Canada law is respected."

"Once a verdict is imposed, Canadian sentiment will see to it that the punishment is such as will act as a deterrent, with a view to terminate the perpetration of this sort of thing, which I regret to say has become so common, namely, the organization of bands of criminals from the United States who come to our country to perpetrate murder." *Transeat in exemplum!*

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THE DISEASE OF DIVORCE.—According to the Report of a Commission on Modern Conditions in Family Life appointed by the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, it appears that there have been 2,250,000 divorces granted in the United States during the fifty years that have elapsed between 1866 and 1916. To realize how rapidly the number of divorces is increasing one has only to learn that in the year 1906 the number amounted to 593,362, while in 1916 it rose to 975,728. The Report makes the following commentary upon this rapidly growing menace to the social life of the nation:

"The situation is rendered still more serious because of the unconcern of the average citizen. The nation itself is committed to a lax attitude. Facilities for dissolving marriage abound, inflaming every trifling dispute, inviting discord, encouraging marital infidelity, and stimulating hasty or secret unions. If the ratio of divorce goes on increasing as at present, the whole conception of Christian marriage will fade from the consciousness of the American people. Thousands of young people in the United States, knowing that the law permits a consecutive polygamy, enter the marriage state with the deliberate purpose of breaking it off, should the first attempt be unsatisfactory."

These considerations but serve to enforce the truth of the French apothegm *le divorce est le sacrement de l'adultère*.

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PRIVY COUNCIL PRECEDENTS IN QUEBEC.—"Privy Council judgments do not make law in this Province," Mr. Justice Bruneau declared from the bench in the Practice Division of the Superior Court at Montreal on the 17th instant, in commenting on precedents in separation cases. "Privy Council judgments may be binding on the parties involved in this Pro-

vince," he continued, "but they do not make law. We have in Quebec our own code of law, and our judicial system, according to which judges have not the power to make the laws. While Privy Council judgments may be law in other provinces, they are not so here."

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CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS.—The Supreme Court of Canada decided on the 10th instant that the Dominion Government had power to authorize the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario (an Ontario government railway) to cross Quebec Crown lands in the gold mining district of Rouyn.

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UNITED STATES AND LEAGUE OF NATIONS.—Debate on the question of the United States becoming a party to the Permanent Court of International Justice was opened in the Senate on the 17th instant by Senator Swanson with a prepared address, requiring nearly three hours for delivery.

"The world is indebted for the new methods to the vision, genius, persistency and courage of Woodrow Wilson," he declared. "In passing, I cannot refrain from giving expression to my own individual views and say that the League of Nations to-day is the most potential factor in the world making for peace and betterment, that it is gaining daily in influence and power, and that the day will ultimately come when the United States will desire and be compelled to become a member."

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CANADA AND PAN-AMERICA.—A proposal that efforts be made to obtain the admission of Canada into full membership in the Pan-American Union, was one of a group of resolutions for promoting better relations between the three Americas adopted on the 17th instant by the Pan-American Commercial Congress at its final session in New York.

The resolution pertaining to Canada suggested that that country and all other western hemisphere political entities be invited into association with the Pan-American Commercial Congress and that the admission of the Dominion into the Pan-American Union be made "to the end that Pan-America may include really all America."

It also was decided that the Pan-American Congress for 1927 be held in Canada.

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DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.—It is said in Geneva that no negative answer is expected by the League of Nations to its invitations to non-member nations to take part in the "preparatory commission for a disarmament Conference," which will convene in that city on February 15, next.

Germany may be the last to reply because of the present ministerial crisis, but she is expected to accept, being herself already hypothetically disarmed.

Soviet Russia with a discontented peasantry and an undependable army, and smarting under Locarno and the more recent financial defeats at London and Paris will, it is believed, at least, state under what terms she might participate, rather than decline outright.

NAVAL OIL LEASE INDICTMENTS.—The Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia refused, on the 19th instant, to reconsider its decision holding valid the bribery indictments against E. L. Doheny, E. L. Doheny, jr., and Albert B. Fall, former Secretary of the Interior.

The indictments, which grew out of the naval oil leases, were quashed by a lower court because an agent of the Department of Justice was in the grand jury room illegally. The Government appealed and the Court of Appeals recently overruled the lower courts. Fall and the Dohenys then asked for a rehearing which was denied as above stated. They may, however, attack the indictments from other angles in the lower courts or take the case to the United States Supreme Court.

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IMPERIAL ITALY.—The interesting report published in London that Premier Mussolini intends to proclaim Italy an empire was received with emphatic denials in official quarters in Rome. The semi-official Stefani Agency announced that it was authorized to declare the report as "absolutely fantastic."

According to an Associated Press report, received on the 21st instant in Canada, it is believed in Rome "that this account of the Premier's intentions originated from the fact that in his speeches he frequently has mentioned his desire that Italy might rise to the status of an empire. It is pointed out that in these passages he did not mean a territorial empire, but an empire of spiritual and cultural influence.

"It is recalled that more than 30 years ago Premier Crispi planned the proclamation of an Italian empire at the time when he thought the kingdom of Abyssinia might become a vassal of Italy. He had even prepared a new coin bearing an effigy of King Humbert with the inscription, 'King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia.' Signor Crispi's plans, however, were nullified by the reverse suffered by Italy in the war with Abyssinia."

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ONTARIO CHURCH PROPERTY COMMISSION.—After an all-day and all-evening hearing the Ontario Church Property Commission at midnight on the 21st instant ruled that it would decline to make any finding or recommend action in the matter of property division as between the non-concurring Presbyterians and those of the church which had voted into union. It is stated there is no appeal from the commission's finding.
