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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

It may be hoped that it is not with the sanction of the Canadian Government that certain journals and correspondents supporting it, are beginning to hint at the possibility of measures being taken to silence the annexationists who have of late been speaking their minds so freely. It can hardly be supposed by the Government or any one else that the numbers and influence of those Canadians who would favour union with the United States are such as to give cause for alarm. Nor can it be that that there is reason to fear that the Canadian people are in danger of being carried away by the overwhelming weight of their arguments. Yet those who utter threats or advocate suppression of free speech must surely fear the one or the other. In any case, no greater service could be rendered the cause of the agitators than an attempt to put any legal obstacles in the way of the open expression of their opinions. To invoke old laws, Imperial or Canadian, for the purpose of putting them down, would be to arouse the sympathy and indignation of all lovers of New World freedom. Thousands of Canadians who neither desire nor fear annexation cherish free speech as an inestimable birthright, hold firmly the right of Canadians to discuss and determine, with perfect freedom, the future of their own country, and understand Canadian patriotism and Canadian loyalty to mean love of Canada and a determination to make her interests their first and highest national consideration.

THE proposal to do away with the exemption from taxation hitherto enjoyed by churches and other religious institutions seems likely to come to the front at an early day for serious discussion. On the initiative of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church in this city, the question was brought before the Baptist Convention in Guelph last month, and by it remitted to the local Associations for consideration. The resolution of the City Council of Ottawa to petition the Ontario Government to abolish this class of exemptions will probably lead to discussions in other municipalities similar to that which is now going on in that city. Whatever position the Baptists,

who claim to be the foremost representatives of the principle of absolute voluntarism in religious matters, may take, there is little probability that many of the other churches will readily approve a change which would be to them a source of so much loss, real or apparent. At the same time it is not easy to see how the system of exemptions can be logically defended on principles consistent with the absolute divorce of Church and State which was long since decreed by the Protestant Provinces of Canada. The argument drawn from the undoubted service which the churches render to society and the State by their educational, benevolent and religious work has the radical defect of proving too much. If the State or municipality is justified in contributing indirectly from public funds in return for these services, it must be equally justifiable for it to contribute directly for the same purpose. It is impossible to show any real difference in principle, and it would not be difficult to show that the direct contribution would be a much more equitable and effective mode of distributing the aid. It must be at once admitted that the exemptions of Government institutions and employees by statute is equally indefensible. It can be but a question of time when the people will come to see these matters in their true light, and all classes of citizens, without exception, will learn to bear cheerfully their fair share of the cost of services in the benefits of which they fully partake.

OUR present Governor-General is adopting a somewhat unusual and courageous course in his replies to the addresses of the various National Societies which he is continually receiving. The very existence of these societies in such numbers and with so much influence is an indication of a weak point in the Canadian Confederation. It is both natural and praiseworthy for the representatives of various countries and races to unite in recalling old scenes and associations, and in paying the tribute of affectionate remembrance to their mother lands. But when the members of these societies enter as such into Canadian politics, instead of regarding all questions that may arise from the point of view of Canadian citizens, pure and simple, they do a wrong to the land of their adoption, and import elements of discord and danger into Canadian affairs. Lord Stanley does well to rebuke this sectional spirit, whether displayed by the Sons of England or the Sons of France. Nothing is more baneful in hindering the growth of a true Canadian sentiment. His Excellency might, however, do well to consider whether another disintegrating force, equally mischievous, is not at work, in the centralizing tendencies of the Dominion Government. In the attempt to hold together a number of provinces so widely separated in space and in local interests and usages, it is tolerably clear that very careful regard must be had to provincial rights and susceptibilities. Of the local units in their relation to the central authority it may be said, as of the colony itself in its relation to the British Government, that the strength of the bond of union will be in proportion to its elasticity. The yoke must rest lightly upon the shoulders long accustomed to local independence. Hitherto the history of confederation has been to a considerable extent the history of the struggles between the Provincial and Dominion Governments over questions of jurisdiction and prerogative. Lord Stanley might possibly render a service to confederation by dropping an occasional hint to his constitutional advisers in regard to the danger of pushing the Premier's well-known predilection for the centralization of authority to an unnecessary and undesirable extreme.

DISCUSSION is still rife in the Australian Colonies in respect to the right of a colony to be consulted regarding the choice of a Governor. While Victoria believes that the less the colonies insist upon a voice in the nomination the better for themselves, New Zealand and New South Wales are said to approve of the stand taken by Queensland. The London *Spectator* takes extreme ground in urging the Government not to revoke the appointment of Governor Blake to Queensland. In this as in most affairs of the kind the middle course seems safest and best. To recognize the right of the colonies to share in such appointments, would be to attenuate the already slender colonial tie to the last degree by doing away with the only periodical and perpetual reminder that the colonies are still a part of the Empire. It would be unfair and absurd to expect the Mother Country to remain responsible for the conduct and defence of a colony in which she was no longer represented by a chief magistrate of her own