

lines will no doubt occur in each of the other Legislatures which are to pass upon the resolutions; and they will probably be carried, if carried at all, on strictly party divisions.

THE first resolution, which is also by far the most important, illustrates well the familiar fact that it is often much easier to prove the existence of a defect or an abuse in a political system than to devise an unobjectionable remedy. Perhaps few Canadians, who can be induced to look at the matter dispassionately in the light of the quarter century of Dominion history, will care to deny that the interferences of the Dominion Government with Provincial legislation have given rise to unexpected, irritating, and even dangerous friction, and that some limit should at least be set to the exercise of the power of veto. Mr. Mowat was unquestionably correct in his contention that the Provinces—the original contracting parties—did not anticipate or intend any such surrender of their cherished autonomy as is involved in the power of absolute veto vested in the central authority, and freely used by it on various occasions. The withdrawal or limitation of this veto power has become in the opinion of very many a necessity to the harmony, if not to the very existence, of the Confederation. But if the withdrawal of the veto power from the Dominion Government necessitates its transference back to the Colonial Office in England, that fact puts quite another face upon the question. Many who hold firmly that the Local Legislatures should be supreme within their own spheres will object most decidedly to subjecting their legislation to the review of clerks or even Ministers in the Colonial Office, who in the very nature of the case will be ignorant of the local causes and circumstances which are often the reason-to-be of such legislation. Had Mr. Meredith, instead of attempting to deny the existence of a real grievance, and the necessity for some amendment in the Constitution in the respect indicated, contented himself with pointing out the very strong and obvious objections to the special amendment proposed, he could have made a much more effective resistance to the first resolution. On the other hand, if a real necessity exists for investing some power with the prerogative of absolute veto, that necessity should be clearly demonstrated to the public. In the absence of such demonstration the public may be pardoned if they fail to see the necessity.

DIVIDED counsels still prevail in Republican circles in the United States, and are likely to prevail until the June Convention pronounces an authoritative decision, as to the most eligible candidate the party can bring forward for the presidency. The report of the correspondent whom the *World* sent from England to Florence to get from Mr. Blaine's own lips an interpretation of his letter, has not left the party leaders much wiser than it found them. As the *Tribune* observes, what Mr. Blaine said to the correspondent was exactly what he had previously said in his letter, that he did not want to be a candidate. Having been defeated, he felt that it was his duty to his party to announce his retirement, thus removing any possible embarrassment in the selection of another candidate. It was in the last degree unlikely that Mr. Blaine would stultify himself by saying anything else, and it is difficult to see what the *World* could have expected to gain by the interview, unless it wished for an unequivocal declaration by Mr. Blaine, such as has been made by several others whose names have been brought forward as candidates, that he positively would not, under any circumstances, accept the nomination. There is still a difference of opinion as to whether Mr. Blaine has yet made such a declaration. Some of his friends still think that the wisest thing the party can do is to nominate him, in spite of his objections. It would not be surprising if this view should prevail. If so, it will remain to be seen whether the honour thus forced upon him will be peremptorily refused by the Maine statesman.

THE Tariff Bill, which has been so long in course of preparation by the Democratic majority of the Ways and Means Committee of the United States Congress, has at last been submitted to the Committee, and made public. It is framed mainly on the lines which have been foreshadowed in the press for weeks past. The total tax reduction proposed is estimated at about \$53,000,000. Of this amount, \$22,250,000 is made up of articles placed on the free list, including wool, salt, lumber, tin plate, jute, hemp, flax, and other fibres, many chemicals, and numerous other minor articles. A weak point in the opinion of many is the omission of coal and iron ore from the free list. The balance of the reduction, amounting to over \$30,000,000, is brought about by lowering the rate of taxation on an extensive list of articles of common consumption, most of them necessities of life. A reduction of about 20 per cent. has been made in sugar. The impost on steel rails is cut down from \$17 to \$11 per ton. Woollen and cotton goods have been to some extent relieved, and so on. The Bill is

by no means a Free Trade measure. It cannot even be said to trend in the direction of Free Trade, save in so far as every reduction of taxation may be said to be a step in that direction. The obvious aim is to cut off fifty millions of surplus revenue with the least possible injury to the Protection character of the tariff. To an outsider this would seem to have been done with such skill as to effect a considerable reduction in the cost of the necessities of life with little or no detriment to the protected industries. It would be strange should Congress prefer to so wise and conservative measure the Republican proposal to remove the internal revenue tax from tobacco and to reduce it on whiskey. Yet, if it be true, as now alleged, that Mr. Randall will oppose the Bill, there would seem to be little probability of its passing the present House.

THE Reading Railroad strike had hardly been compromised when it was followed by a strike of the Locomotive Engineers on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Roads, which is assuming very serious dimensions. As this movement seems to be directly under the management of Mr. Arthur, and to have the full approval of the section of the Knights of Labour which he controls, it must be assumed that it is not entered upon lightly or without what is believed to be a serious grievance. The primary question is said to be one of wages, but the crisis seems to have been hastened, if not brought about, by the substitution of an unpopular for a very popular manager, and a demand for increased work of an unpleasant character, such as cleaning the engines, from the engineers. It is impossible for those at a distance to pronounce on the questions of right and wrong involved in such disputes. The conviction that forces itself upon the mind is that of the growing and imperative necessity, in the public interest, of empowering some authoritative tribunal to settle such disputes. It is unendurable that the business arrangements of large tracts of country and of thousands of people should be liable at any moment to be thrown into confusion by a quarrel between a body of workmen and their foreman. Sooner or later, and perhaps the sooner the better the State, that is the people, will have to take the business in hand of settling labour disputes, especially those in connection with Railways.

THE *London Times* contains a forecast of the English Local Government Bill. Some of its leading features are the following: The elective system already in operation in the boroughs is to be extended to the counties, though with some reservations. The Poor Law guardians, for instance, also the school boards, and even the county judiciary—"the pundits of Quarter Sessions," as Sir William Harcourt terms them—will remain on the same basis as hitherto. The question of the disposal of the county police seems to have been a hard one for the Government. Tory opinion, or prejudice, was naturally opposed to a transfer of the control of these custodians of the peace to the elective local authority, lest the enforcement of law should become in some measure dependent on local influences and prepossessions. "In a county where the sentiment of the electors was strongly against tithes, it is conceivable," says the *Mail*, "that representatives might be pledged to withhold the aid of the police from the tithe-collector." On the other hand, to withhold from the new county authority the control of this force, which is granted to the borough authorities, would be to make an invidious distinction likely to be anything but acceptable to the former. Then again, in deciding such a question, the Government must perforce have special regard to what is likely to be agreeable to their Liberal-Unionist supporters, who, it may be pretty safely conjectured, will lean to the more liberal measures. The inference left to be drawn is, apparently, that the more democratic alternative will prevail. Probably the most difficult question of all is that in regard to the licensing power. Strange to say the Licensed Victuallers and the United Kingdom Temperance Alliance, both of which have been heard by depositions, are at one in preferring that the power to grant licenses should remain with the appointed county justices, rather than with the elective boards, though for very different reasons, the former fearing restriction, and the latter corruption. The Alliance will, however, be satisfied with nothing short of a periodical *plébiscite* in each locality, a pitch of radicalism to which no Conservative Government is likely to rise, even to conciliate its Liberal supporters.

A STATEMENT recently made by the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *London Times* is thought to give the clue to a mysterious allusion in Bismarck's great speech before the Reichstag. The Prince said that, after the Berlin Congress, the vain attempts of Russia to excite Germany against Austria ended in "complete threats of war from the most competent quarter," and that hence sprang the Austro-German "pact of peace" of 1879. In 1879, as now, the difficulty arose in connection with a con-