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THE strike is a harsh as well as a most wasteful mode of conducting an industrial war, which should have been long since superseded in civilized communities. It would be a bootless task to attempt just now to enter into the merits of the questions at issue between the members of the various building trades in Toronto and their employees; but it is by no means creditable to the intelligence and capacity of all concerned that such questions should still have to be settled with such weapons. No one who is at all familiar with the history of labour unions, and who reflects upon all that they have already accomplished for the elevation of the status of the working classes, can readily condemn the principle of such unions. Nor can anyone who will honestly put himself in the workman's place and realize all that an increase of twenty-five or fifty cents in the wages, or the reduction of an hour in the length, of a day's labour, means to him and his family; and who will at the same time remember how powerless to secure either is the workingman single-handed in the presence of his employer and in the face of the ever-fierce competition, refuse to sympathize more or less heartily with the peaceful striker. No doubt many of those who are readiest to denounce the concerted action which causes so much inconvenience and loss, would, had they happened to be in the place of the artisans in question, have been among the foremost to resort to the measures they now denounce. Nor, on the other hand, should we forget to realize the position in which many a contractor no doubt finds himself, when, having placed himself under engagement, enforceable by heavy penalties, to finish a certain undertaking within a certain date, he now finds himself face to face with a cessation of work, or a demand for increased wages, either of which may mean heavy loss or bankruptcy. The more thoroughly we strive to realize the position of either party, and to get a fair conception of the rights and wrongs of both, the more clearly apparent is the necessity for establishing some competent and impartial tribunal, acceptable to both parties, to act as arbiter in all such cases. The slowness of both parties to consent to abide by the decision of such a tribunal, or to resort to the simple expedient of arbitration, is remarkable. The cost of such a Board or Court would be a mere trifle beside the waste and loss brought about by a general strike for even a few days, not to say

weeks. Such blindness and obstinacy on both sides are all the more astonishing in view of the fact that in nine cases out of ten, after untold suffering and loss have been incurred, the settlement is usually effected by means of mutually chosen representatives whose action is, in many respects, very similar to that of a Board of Arbitration.

THE Premier of New Brunswick, Mr. Blair, has introduced into the newly elected assembly of that province, a bill to amend the provincial law relating to controverted elections. One of the provisions of the proposed bill is as follows: "In the case of any election petition hereafter to be noticed for trial the respondent may, upon giving the notice 'A' in the schedule to this Act, to the petitioner ten days before the day fixed for the hearing of the trial of the election petition, adduce evidence before the election judge at the time and place fixed for the trial, but before evidence is received in support of the petition, to show that corrupt practices within the meaning of the controverted Elections Act were committed by the petitioner or the unsuccessful candidates or their agents in the said election, and upon such being made to appear, the judge shall forthwith dismiss the election petition without further hearing or trying the same." This is probably one of the most extraordinary bits of legislation ever proposed by a responsible minister in a Canadian legislature. With such a measure in force the chances of being able to unseat a member guilty of corrupt practices will be in inverse ratio with the degree of corruption prevailing in the constituency. A candidate who happened to have command of unlimited funds need only be assured that his opponent or some of his supporters were resorting to bribery, and he could proceed to buy up the constituency with impunity. Nay, it is quite conceivable that he might himself bribe some person to commit or procure a provable act of bribery on behalf of his opponent, in order to secure himself against the effects of the grossest corruption on his own behalf. This is surely, as a New Brunswick journal, not unfriendly to the Blair administration, has said, "to place a premium upon corrupt practices at elections." It proceeds, apparently, upon the assumption that an honest election is too much to expect, and that to make absolute freedom from proved corruption a condition of membership of the legislature, would be raising the standard of electoral purity to an impracticable height. It is not too much to say that the minister or member who could seriously propose such a law, fairly exposes himself thereby to suspicion of having unworthy ulterior ends in view, and it is not at all surprising that Mr. Blair should be suspected and accused of seeking to legislate with a view to the case pending in the courts against himself. It is inconceivable that the legislature of New Brunswick can be betrayed by any excess of partisan feeling, into passing such a measure. Should it do so it would earn for itself a most unenviable notoriety as a legislative body.

THOSE of the Canadian public who care for the reputation of their legislators and public officers will await with some anxiety the reports of the two committees which have been intrusted with inquiring into the serious charges which have been laid against two public men, and the action of the house in regard to the reports when presented. Though the cases are quite unconnected and dissimilar in kind, as well as in the positions held by the accused, there are two or three points in which they are curiously parallel. In neither case is the committee obliged to go into an extended hearing and sifting of testimony, the evidence in both cases being supplied by the accused himself. It is still more remarkable that in both cases the person so accused is, or appears to be, serenely unconscious of having done anything particularly reprehensible. In commenting on the case of General Middleton a week or two since, we expressed our surprise and regret that a gentleman in his high position could permit that advantage should be taken of a technicality to limit the scope of the enquiry, thus leaving some of the most serious allegations unanswered, and allowing the verdict of public opinion to be recorded against him, as it were, by default. At the next meeting of the committee General Middleton made a statement intended to cover the whole ground, though it is matter for deep regret that that statement was little more than an

admission of the facts charged. Some of the General's replies before the committee were very astonishing. That a British officer, supposed to be thoroughly imbued with the honourable traditions of the British army, could believe that, in quelling an insurrection in a British colony, he was empowered to confiscate on his own authority the property of persons suspected to be rebels, without even the formality of a regular inquiry, is sufficiently wonderful. But that such an officer could further believe that he had a right to distribute the confiscated property among the members of his staff, retaining a Benjamin's portion for himself, and that he could not only seize and use, for the present emergency, horses of whose ownership he knew nothing, but could retain such animals as his own after the close of the *emeute*, would have surpassed belief had we not had it from his own lips. The action which the committee may recommend and Parliament take in the premises will be awaited by the public, as we have said, with the interest that attaches to a matter in which the honour of the militia and of the country is involved.

THE case of Mr. Rykert, which will probably have been disposed of by the committee by the time this number of THE WEEK goes to press, has features no less peculiar, in addition to those to which we have already adverted, which it has in common with the other. The defence in this case has two phases. In the first instance Mr. Rykert pleads his own cause. Two features of his personal plea are especially noticeable. He unequivocally and emphatically clears the ministers implicated from the charges of having been moved by bribes or other improper influences. We do not suppose any one for a moment believed the ministers capable of such corrupt action, and the peculiarity of the case is that no such charges been and formulated or even insinuated elsewhere than in Mr. Rykert's own letters. Mr. Rykert's attempt to show that the promise and subsequent receipt of the stipulated gift of \$75,000 for his wife had no connection with himself and no influence upon his own conduct might perhaps do for a modern Apella, but could hardly satisfy any one else. The other phase of the investigation is that in which Mr. Rykert's legal representative, Mr. William Macdougall, pleads his cause on purely legal and technical grounds, disdaining, apparently, to refer to the moral aspects of the case. This plea is two-fold, first, that the Commons has no power under the constitution to take cognizance of the private correspondence of a member or to expel him on the ground of anything contained in such correspondence; and secondly, that, even if it had such power, it could expel only for an offence committed against its own dignity, not for one against that of a former parliament. The argument is of course one for the lawyers or the judges. To the lay mind the first part of the plea sounds more or less absurd, the second, plausible. But as there is no motion before the House or the committee for expulsion, the line of defence seems irrelevant, save as it may be directed to forestall a supposable recommendation of the committee. No constitutional law, written or unwritten, can prevent the House of Commons, if so disposed, from pronouncing a certain transaction or series of transactions of one of its members, "discreditable, corrupt and scandalous," and this is all that Sir. Richard Cartwright's motion proposed to do. It should be enough. The member who could go on sitting in the House which had pronounced such an opinion upon his conduct, would undergo a punishment in the daily consciousness of having lost the respect both of himself and of his fellow members, which would be worse than expulsion.

MONDAY last was a North-West day in the Commons. It is not too much to say that the hopes of Canada are centred in the North-West to a greater extent than in any other part of the Dominion, by reason of its unlimited possibilities of development. Whatever tends to promote, or threatens to retard, that development, demands the most serious consideration. There can be little doubt that some of the measures proposed and advocated by Mr. Davin are either premature or uncalled for, but others of them deserved much more favourable consideration than they received. The facts stated by other North-West