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

CURRENT TOPICS.

Was the promise of "active aid" to the opponents of Home Rule in Ireland, made by Mr. Clarke Wallace on behalf of the Orangemen of Canada, meant to indicate physical force, or merely moral influence? The answer to this question determines whether Mr. Wallace's speech was or was not censurable. It was noteworthy that while several of Mr. Wallace's defenders on the floors of Parliament were very sure that the latter only was meant, Mr. Wallace himself very carefully abstained from giving any such assurance, though he might no doubt have put a stop to the discussion and relieved the Government from a very embarrassing position by a word to that effect. It is pretty certain, therefore, that he meant just what his words on their face, taken in connection with the undoubted and open threats of violent resistance freely made in Ulster, appear to mean. That being the case it appears to us that many of

the speakers lost sight of a very obvious distinction in their zeal to defend Mr. Wallace from the threatened censure of the House, the distinction, viz., between resistance to an act or policy deemed unjust and oppressive, and resistance to the views and will of the majority as expressed in an Act of Parliament. The rule of the majority is very far from being a guarantee of ideal wisdom or justice in legislation, but it is the best system human brains have yet been able to devise for the government of a free, self-ruling people. It is quite conceivable that under the sanction of the majority, an Administration may be guilty of acts of oppression and tyranny against the minority. In that case, when constitutional means have failed, there remains only the sacred right of rebellion, and brave men will not long hesitate to resort to it rather than submit to continued oppression.

To take an illustration. Reference was more than once had in the course of the debate to the last Riel rebellion. If, as was believed by many, the Half-breeds had a real grievance, if they were being unjustly and harshly treated, or if their just claims were being continuously disregarded by the Administration, and if constitutional means of obtaining redress had been faithfully tried and had failed, they were justified on the principle in question, however foolish the course may have been, in seeking redress by force of arms. It may even be pleaded, seeing that the points for which they contended were conceded by the Government immediately after the rising, that the rebellion was successful. But for a minority to rise in rebellion against a change in the system of administration in a certain locality; a change, too, which, if it takes place, will have been made only after long discussion and as the result of a Parliamentary election, is clearly a very different matter. In order to justify it, one must admit either that not the majority but the minority shall have the right to legislate in the given case, or that the majority, having fully decided in regard to a given course, shall retreat from their position and be guilty of bad faith to the constituencies which have elected them, at the dictation and threat of a minority who do not approve of their measures and who contemptuously refuse to give the scheme of the majority a trial and wait to see whether the special guarantees given them against the wrongs they fear, prove effectual. Surely the Canadian who, occupying a position of influence and responsibility whether just within or just without the sacred Government cir-

cle, promises to take part in such a rebellion as that against the Crown and Parliament of the Mother Country, should never again make boast of his loyalty, and should be repudiated by his loyal associates in the Dominion Parliament.

The Minister of Finance has been peculiarly unfortunate in his temporary leadership, since the departure of the Premier. Two worse tactical blunders than those which have been made in connection with the vote of censure moved in reference to Mr. Clarke Wallace's utterance and the French Treaty affair, are not easily imagined. In the former case his tardy and ambiguous declaration that those who voted for the motion of censure would be no friends of the Government, had the effect of compelling two of his own colleagues and several members who are usually supporters of the Administration, to put themselves in that category. What is to be done with such insubordinates remains to be seen, though it is natural that their official head must be of the kind called "strained," for some time to come at least. Mr. Foster's remarks touching the French Treaty have left him in a still worse dilemma, involving, so far as can be seen, either a rather humiliating retreat on his own part, or the withdrawal of Sir Charles Tupper from the office of High Commissioner, which was thought by many to have been created mainly for his benefit. It is possible that in both these cases Mr. Foster may have been simply carrying out the decisions of his colleagues, but if so he is peculiarly unfortunate in being compelled to act as mouthpiece under the circumstances.

The slow progress that has been made with Dr. Weldon's Bill for the disfranchisement of electors guilty of accepting bribes is adapted to create unpleasant doubts in regard to the intense anxiety of the average member of Parliament to put a complete stop to the purchasing of votes. It is astonishing how many difficulties there are found to be in details when almost every one approves of the principles of the Bill. One would suppose that it would be comparatively easy for the combined wisdom and skill of the experienced legislators in the House to improve and amend until the objectionable and unworkable features were eliminated. It is idle to oppose the Bill, as some do, on the ground that it makes no provision for the punishment of the purchaser of votes, for the promoter has expressed his willingness to extend its provisions