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CURRENT TOPICS.

The coincidence of Lieut.-Governor Chapleau's and Sir Adolphe Caron's visits to Paris, during Sir John Thompson's enforced sojourn in that city, has very naturally given rise to rumours of coming changes in the Dominion Cabinet. While it is quite probable that these visits may not be without political significance, it is evident that little reliance can be placed upon the guesses which have been published touching the nature of the changes which may be under consideration. It is, for instance, in the highest degree unlikely that such a movement as the offering of the London High Commissionership to Sir Adolphe could be seriously thought of, though it is far from unlikely that the retirement of that gentleman from the Government at an early day may be contemplated. Nor, in view of well-known incidents in his official history,

is it easy to believe that, notwithstanding his admitted ability and influence, Mr. Chapleau's return to office as a Cabinet Minister would be regarded with complacency, much less desired by the Premier and his colleagues. Perhaps the one element of truth in all the rumoured changes is the belief indicated that recent events have seriously weakened the hold of the present Government upon the country, and that its Premier and some of its leading members are not blind to the necessity of strengthening their position before the next meeting of Parliament. But as they are not in the habit of taking newspaper reporters or the public into their confidence in such matters, we shall probably have to await developments with what patience we can command.

Whatever may be the fate of the attempt to obtain Home Rule for Ireland, the Parish Councils Bill now before the British Commons, with, it is believed, every prospect of being passed with the consent of both parties, bids fair to make parish home rule, in the fullest meaning of the term, a fact accomplished. The Bill is said to have been framed with great care by a number of the men of largest experience and ripest judgment in the ranks of the Liberal Party. The new Bill accepts the parish as the unit of English rural life. The power heretofore vested in the squire, the rector, and the church-warden, will hereafter be vested in representative local parish councils. Parishes containing less than three hundred persons are to be grouped for the purposes of the Bill. All parishes containing more than three hundred, which category comprises, it is said, nine thousand out of a total of fifteen thousand, will elect councils composed of from five to fifteen members, according to population. These councils will act as administrative and executive bodies in all local affairs. They will have the management of parochial property, water supplies, fire-engines and fire-escapes, lighting and local improvements of all sorts, public libraries, etc. The "Speaker" describes the Bill as a restoration of the early methods of English village life, before it was handed over to a feudal aristocracy. It is quite likely that popular squires, rectors and church wardens will be given a prominent and influential part in the working of the new machinery for some time to come, but none the less its effect in developing intelligence, manliness, business capacity, and independence of spirit, in the common people, cannot fail to be powerful.

Putting aside, as we think we can do, all local feeling, it strikes us as not unnatural or unreasonable that the members of the Canadian Institute should be unwilling to accept for it a position of subordination to its younger though more ambitious sister, the Royal Society of Canada. Like individuals, societies which have achieved a certain measure of success by their own unaided efforts and in the face of serious obstacles, develop an individuality in which they take an honest pride, and which they are loth to sacrifice even for the sake of superior advantages in certain respects. To such, the loss of individuality means often a loss of strength. We have never been able to take kindly to the close-corporation idea in literature or philosophy, any more than in manufactures or commerce or professional life, and hence, perhaps, are hardly in a position to offer an opinion upon such a matter. But there is surely room for question whether the Royal Society might not strengthen its position and enlarge its usefulness by making provision, if its constitution does not now admit of such an arrangement, whereby old and well-established societies such as the Canadian Institute might become associated on terms of equality, or at least on conditions which would enable the two to work together and become mutually helpful, without offending the natural *amour propre* of either. We venture the remark on general principles for what it is worth, and without any knowledge, other than that gleaned from the rather spirited discussion at Ottawa, of the views and feelings of the members of the Canadian Institute, of whom we have not the honour to be one.

Not the least interesting among the proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, at its recent annual meeting, were the felicitous address read by the President, Dr. Bourinot, to His Excellency the Earl of Derby, on the occasion of his retirement from the position of Honorary President of the Society, as a necessary consequence of the termination of his term of office as Governor-General of the Dominion. The deep affliction through which His Excellency has been called to pass rendered especially appropriate the expression of sympathy in which the members of the Society gave voice to the feeling of all classes of Canadian citizens, as well as to their own. The same remark may with equal confidence be made with regard to the warm tribute paid by the Society to