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CURRENT TOPICS.

The decision of the British Government to establish a protectorate over Uganda will be approved by most thoughtful citizens of the Empire. The alternative being the handing over of the region to the tender mercies of whoever might succeed in seizing and holding it, in the rush which would have been made had the British claim been withdrawn, it is not easy to see how the Government could have done otherwise than it has done, without incurring a far greater responsibility than that involved in the present arrangement. Meanwhile it is to be hoped that an end will be made of the practice of leaving the work of conquering and ruling such countries to chartered companies. The mistakes and abuses which are sure to follow in the wake of such companies, and of which it is very likely the half is never known, will not, it is to be hoped, be again repeated in British history. No doubt,

now that the responsibility for the future of the country is openly assumed, the opening up by railroads and the establishment of a strong and stable government, able to protect the weak and punish outrages, will not long be delayed. The question of the annexation of Samoa to New Zealand is a much more complicated one. The Government will, evidently and rightly, not attempt to settle it without the full consent and concurrence of the United States and Germany, the other great nations involved. Unless jingoistic sentiments should gain the ascendancy, it is not likely that either of these nations is sufficiently interested in the matter to raise serious objections.

Though the investigations by the Legislative Committees may not have revealed anything very corrupt in the management of the Ontario Registry offices, which were made the subject of special enquiry, enough was revealed to justify the attack of the Opposition on the method of payment by fees in these and other offices. It is contrary to the principle which should prevail under any system of popular government that the Administration of the day should have a number of specially lucrative positions with which they may reward their followers, or which they may dangle before their eyes as possible future rewards of party loyalty and usefulness. Of course, as has been again and again made clear, this question is entirely distinct from that of requiring those who make use of such offices to pay for the service rendered. The latter arrangement is manifestly just and right. But it is not easy to conceive of anything which tends more to perpetuate the use of improper influences and corrupt dealing in politics, than for the party in power to have in their hands a number of fat offices, from which the lucky appointees may receive incomes out of proportion to the kind and amount of the work done. The possession of such patronage is a temptation from which the most virtuous Government should be delivered, and which it ought not to desire. The sooner all public officials are paid by fixed salaries, carefully graduated according to the amount of labour, education, and skill required, the better for honest administration. As a corollary from this self-evident principle, the payments should be given to those who do the actual work and not to sinecurists receiving the appointments by political favour, employing assistants at small salaries to do work for them, and pocketing the difference.

In fulfilment of their pledge of long standing, the British Government has introduced into the Commons a bill for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales. The bill will no doubt be passed pretty readily by the Commons. It will, probably, be thrown out as promptly by the Lords. The latter event, if it takes place, will be rather pleasing than otherwise to the Radicals, as helping to fill up the measure of their Lordships' iniquities, and make them ripe for the coming judgment. The remarkable thing in connection with this new step in carrying out the programme of the Government is the peculiar position said to have been taken by Lord Rosebery, in a recent speech. He is reported to have said that the State had just as much right to establish and provide for a church as to establish and provide for an army or any other institution which it deemed to be beneficial to it. His reason for favouring disestablishment, so far as can be gathered from the fragmentary reports of his speech which have reached us, is that the Established Church has become a hotbed of Toryism, and must for that reason be rooted out. This will be very far from satisfactory to those Nonconformists who oppose the Establishment on the ground that its existence is a violation of a great principle. An influential Edinburgh minister says in the *Christian World* that the U. P.'s will not vote to disendow the church of their fathers from any sinister motive and intimates that the question must be settled on far higher ground. His meaning is, no doubt, that such an establishment is an intrusion of the State into a realm which is quite beyond and above its jurisdiction. It is pretty clear that should the leader of the Government seek to debase the question to the low level of political or party expediency, refusing to see the principle of liberty of conscience in religious matters, which is the main question with the more earnest advocates of disestablishment, he will quickly lose his hold on an influential body of supporters.

It is not easy to understand why Mr. Meredith and his followers, and a certain portion of the Conservative press, should have set themselves in so determined opposition to the proposed Registration Bill of the Mowat Government. The bill may be defective in some of its details. We confess ourselves unable to see how the registration of the large numbers of young men who will undoubtedly avail themselves of