

to perform it? If so, why should not the same principle be extended, say to parcels, seeing that the Postal Service has a parcels delivery branch? It is obvious that the postal business is in some respects peculiar, since the Government is in a manner obliged, in the interests of the public, to maintain the service as a public work. The question resolves itself into one of the justice or otherwise of compelling the residents of cities to pay a special tax toward making up the deficiency in the revenues of the Postal Department.

IT is, perhaps, just as well that the hollow pretence of the neutrality of Dominion statesmen in Provincial politics has been long since abandoned, so that we can now view the spectacle of the Premier of the Dominion attending a banquet to a Quebec party leader, and urging the gentlemen present to organize for the overthrow of the Local Government, without any sensation of surprise or incongruity. The recent gathering of Quebec Conservatives to do honour to Mr. Taillon, and to marshal their forces for the coming battle, seems to have been large and enthusiastic, and will, no doubt, have considerable effect upon the fortunes of the party in the coming struggle. The time was well chosen, if, at least, reliance may be placed on the confident assurances from Conservative sources, that the star of Mercier has passed the zenith and is hastening downwards to its setting. It may be hard for the dispassionate onlooker to determine whether a change from a spurious Liberalism, strongly tinged with Ultramontanism, to a Conservatism of the old-fashioned and not too savoury Quebec type, would be for the better or the worse. But it can hardly be otherwise than matter for regret to such an one that Sir John A. Macdonald should have thought it in good taste, on such an occasion, to utter his ominous jest in respect to the principle on which the next re-distribution of seats in the Commons will be made. Many who may be unable to appreciate a joke, coming from such a quarter, based on such a record, and deriving its point from the supposition of such a betrayal of trust on the part of the real ruler of the Dominion, would have been delighted had the venerable Premier taken advantage of the occasion to say that, in view of the serious charges levelled against the Government in regard to the last re-distribution, they had resolved henceforth to follow British precedent, and entrust this delicate piece of business to the hands of a committee so constituted that no one could impugn its competency or fairness. Such a declaration would have been worthy of a British statesman. Is it too lofty for a Canadian?

WERE it not for the seriousness of the issues involved, there would be something almost comical in the wranglings of the opponents of the Jesuits' Estates Bill in regard to the best method of compassing its destruction. The late meeting of the Orange Grand Lodge brought out the differences of opinion and policy in sharp relief. At least three courses were before the body, which was, of course, bound to put itself on record in opposition to the Act. It might petition the Dominion Government to disallow the Act; it might memorialize the Queen to the same effect; or it might seek to have the constitutionality of the Act tested in the courts, and, if necessary, before the British Privy Council. The *Globe* counselled the first; that would embarrass the Government. The Orange friends of the Government urged, we believe, the second; it would remove the onus from the shoulders of Ottawa statesmen. The Lodge adopted the third, which is probably the most hopeful, though that is, perhaps, saying little for it. It augurs ill for the success of a great popular movement when so many of its leaders have conflicting political interests to serve or safeguard.

THE Prisoners' Aid Association is very properly asking the sympathy and co-operation of the religious organizations of the Province in securing the reforms in prison management on behalf of which it has memorialized the Ontario Government. It is to be hoped that the response from the churches may be as hearty and sincere as the merits of the case demand. Judges, wardens of prisons, governors of gaols, and inspectors of prisons are, we are told, agreed that the county gaols "instead of being reformatories—as they should be—are, in most cases, actually schools of vice." This is a most serious arraignment. It impugns our intelligence, our political sagacity and our Christian civilization. If the good people addressed really believe that such evil methods and influences are actually working out such results in our midst, under forms of law, they will surely give themselves and the public no

rest until a change has been effected. Amongst the reforms sought by the Association is that boys under fourteen, not previously vicious, shall be restored to their parents, upon the latter giving a guarantee of the future good conduct of the culprit. The *Mail* mentions a singular case in which a county judge let a young culprit go free, under suspended sentence, on condition of his father undertaking to give the boy a sound whipping under the supervision of an officer of the court. The *Mail* thinks that some punishment of the kind should be inflicted in each case, as a preliminary to the sending of a boy of confirmed evil propensities to the Industrial School or reformatory. Whether such a discipline would be likely to promote or retard the work of reform, which is the sole object of these institutions, is a question worth considering. But that all such offenders should be put under the best possible training with a view to reformation, instead of being sent to herd with hardened prisoners in the gaols, admits of no question.

WHILE the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been attempting, so far unsuccessfully, to put a stop to pigeon shooting from traps, a similar society in England has succeeded in bringing a much more detestable practice under the ban of the courts. A Norfolk farmer was summoned by the agents of the Society for having unlawfully and cruelly tortured thirty-two bullocks by dishorning them. The accused admitted the fact. He did not deny that the act was productive of the most excruciating pain. He merely pleaded that it was necessary as increasing the value of the animals, diminishing the amount of space required for them, and lessening the danger of their injuring each other. The local magistrates dismissed the case, but the Queen's Bench Judges, on appeal, declared that the practice of dishorning is absolutely illegal and ought to be suppressed. The two Judges, Lord Coleridge and Mr. Justice Hawkins, vied with each other in their expressions of horror and detestation. The former pronounced it "detestably brutal," and the latter shuddered to think that men could be found to perform an operation so revolting and torturing. We hope the horrible practice has not found its way into our North-West ranches; but it is not long since we saw it elaborately defended in an American journal, and the tone of the discussion seemed to indicate that the operation was not an unusual one. It cannot be too clearly borne in mind, in reference to all such acts involving the infliction of unnecessary pain upon the lower animals, that however strongly the mute agony of the poor brutes appeals to every heart not absolutely callous, the degradation of the human soul which results inevitably from cruel practices is a still stronger argument for their prohibition. A humane society, well conducted, is one of the best agencies for the education of human nature on its nobler side.

CANADIANS who love "peace with honour" will regret the occasion which has again compelled the seizure of an American fishing craft for trespass, but they will clearly see that, if the case be as represented, the cruiser and the authorities had no alternative. The Dominion Government, with the approval of all parties, has, in continuing the *modus vivendi* so long after the failure of the negotiations which it was designed to aid, carried conciliation to the farthest point consistent with Canadian self-respect and a due regard to national rights. If the evidence of intention to fish within the prohibited bounds be as clear as it seems to be, even Mr. Blaine can hardly have a word to say on behalf of a poacher so insensible to all considerations of honesty and generosity. But whether the uncertain Secretary of State approves or disapproves, there is nothing for Canada to do in the meantime but to pursue the even tenor of her way. Her present attitude is one which must commend itself to every unprejudiced mind. She has conceded to the United States fishermen every privilege and courtesy in her power, without surrender of the territorial rights which are hers by the universal law and custom of nations. Having, pursuant to this policy, put it in the power of every American vessel to obtain a license under the *modus vivendi*, on payment of a small fee as a recognition of sovereignty, the Government is bound, in defence of Canadian interest and dignity, to visit the full rigours of the law upon all transgressors.

THE denial of Sir James Ferguson, in the British House of Commons, disposes of the sensational rumour that Canadian sealers in Behring's Sea are to be protected by British warships. Beyond that all is darkness. In the multiplicity of contradictory rumours it is uncertain

whether the British Government is even continuing to press the matter upon the attention of the American Cabinet. It seems incredible, however, that such pressure can be relaxed until the rights of British subjects on the high seas are recognized, and compensation made for the losses inflicted upon Canadian subjects while in pursuit of a lawful calling. It is still harder to accept the statements upon which the newspapers of the United States seem now almost agreed, namely, that Secretary Blaine, supported by the President, is determined to assert the jurisdiction of the United States over the waters on the Alaskan side of Behring's Sea, regardless of the three-mile limit which bounds the territorial domain of every other nation. One thing is brought out very clearly by this and other disputes with the United States which some Canadians might do well to ponder. The powers of an American Administration in international matters seem practically as absolute as those of Germany or, we might almost say, Russia. The change of President every four years, and the complete reconstruction of the Cabinet which political exigencies then demand, may result in filling the Cabinet offices with men unversed in the art, and untrained in the principles of statesmanship. And yet such a Cabinet may commit the nation to almost any position, no matter how untenable or outrageous, with practical impunity. The apathy of the people, too, is astonishing in a Republic which boasts so loudly of freedom and self-government. While in England the Prime Minister and his Cabinet can make no important movement affecting the relations of the country with another nation, without being at once made to feel the force of public opinion, and to know that to do violence to that opinion means sudden overthrow, the Government of the greatest Republic under the sun has *carte blanche* for four years to work any international injustice or mischief which the wrong-headedness of its members may dictate. In the present case, for instance, it is clear that though the sound common sense of the majority of press and people condemns the alleged attitude of the Government, the possibility of compelling a change in the interests of international peace and morality seems hardly to be taken into the account. What the Government may do, the people are supposed to sanction, irrespective of their views as to the right or wrong of it.

DEFENDING President Harrison against the charge of having repudiated the pledges of his party and himself concerning Civil Service Reform, the *New York Independent* says:

"We are told as a further proof of his violation of his own pledges that he has appointed Republican partisans, men who helped his party to win, to high positions. Suppose he has. No sensible man could expect him to appoint Democrats. Civil Service Reform does not require a Republican President to make his appointments from the Democratic Party, nor a Democratic President to make his appointments from the Republican Party. This is not reform at all but simple silliness. Reformers must be reasonable in their demands."

The *Independent* puts the matter in the most favourable light. It ignores the fact that officials of equal, in many cases no doubt of superior, ability are being displaced in order to make room for these partisan appointments. But, taking its apology as it stands, to how low an ebb must American politics have fallen when even a religious, or politico-religious, paper of the high standing and calibre of the *Independent* can seriously write thus! The idea that there is no necessary connection between a man's political opinions and his fitness to perform the duties of office in the Republic, that the sole qualifications for the public service should be personal integrity and ability, seems not to have dawned upon the editorial mind. While a system of appointments in which party considerations should be ignored and merit only considered would be "simple silliness" in the eyes of such a paper, the prospects for any Civil Service Reform worthy of the name must be small indeed.

THE appalling calamity which has so suddenly swept away whole towns and villages in Western Pennsylvania, and hurried their inhabitants by thousands into eternity, is probably without a parallel in the annals of destruction by flood on this continent. Had it belonged unmistakably to the class of disasters that can neither be prevented nor foreseen, there would be nothing left but to alleviate as far as possible the condition of the suffering survivors, and to learn one more impressive lesson in regard to the uncertainty of human life. But, as far as can be gathered from the meagre facts yet furnished, it is pretty evident that the event was not one of that class. It appears to