

is about to bring forth fruit in an unlooked-for manner. Taken with the circumstance that the authorities at Washington have recognized the new republic and have entered into fraternal relations with the Brazilian government, it has led to the formation of leagues at Rio Janeiro, Bahai, Para, Santos, and Pernambuco, the members of which pledge themselves to boycott British in favor of American goods. Of course Lord Salisbury will feel awfully sorry and will forthwith bring his knees to mother earth and fill his eyes with tears that he may persuade those whom he has so grossly offended to turn from their heartless purpose. For do they not see that the withdrawal of their patronage would prove the death blow to British enterprise and prosperity. Joking aside, we have here an instance of people cutting off their nose to spite their face.

In his speech on his new education bill Attorney-General Martin said: "The (Manitoba) government proposes to establish a purely national system of schools, a system under which every individual in the Province will have the same rights and privileges, under which no denomination, nor race, nor class, nor creed will be recognised, but a system under which any parents, be they rich or poor, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic or Presbyterian, can send their children to school, feeling sure that they will be treated alike without any reference to race, nationality or creed." He found no warrant in the British North America Act for the objection that the proposed changes were unconstitutional. He prophesied that an appeal to the courts would sustain the government in this as in the recent railway contention. He denied that any agreement had been entered into by the Dominion government in 1870 guaranteeing separate schools to the province, and contended that had such an agreement been made it would mean nothing, as no treaty could bind the province for all time. Whether the prairie province will thus early and easily relieve herself of the question which at present so greatly vexes the older provinces of the Dominion, remains to be seen. For the present at least they seem bent on radical measures.

The distinction drawn by Sir Charles Russell in criticizing the report of the Parnell commission is worth remembering by those who would estimate at their proper value the judgment of commissions similar to that which has just concluded its investigations into the charges preferred against Mr. Parnell and other Irish members of Parliament. Said he, "I have the greatest respect for the opinion of the judges on questions that are capable of direct disproof, but not when they begin to draw inferences." This thought seems to have been in the mind of Hon. Mr. Gladstone when speaking upon the same subject. "In what respect," he asks, "had the three judges of the commission more weight and authority than other experienced men in deciding how far crime was due to the League and how far to oppressive evictions?" Here they leave the hard ground of fact to tread the uncertain ground of inference. To follow them with the same unquestioning faith in the latter as in the former, is to ascribe to them a respect and authority which they cannot justly claim. This confusion of ideas, however, which makes a judge a better judge of the effects of certain causes simply because he is an authority in associated domain, is one that operates far more widely than this particular case would indicate. It is this confusion of the physical scientist with the philosopher and the giving to the philosopher all the weight of authority that

goes with the scientist, that is responsible for much of the disquiet and unrest of many minds regarding those truths which relate to the unseen world. We shall do well, therefore, to keep before us the above distinction, the remembrance of which may be of great advantage to us in our meditations and reflections upon life's great and mysterious problems.

The combined cities of New York and Brooklyn take the palm and lead the world in the matter of large petitions. The monster was presented to the New York Assembly one day last week. It contains 51,144 signatures from New York city and over 16,000 from Brooklyn, and is bound in book form. The book is twenty-six inches wide, thirty-two inches long, eight feet thick, and weighs half a ton. It was carried into the Assembly Chamber on the shoulders of eight men, and was laid, not on the table, but on the floor of the House. This unrivalled petition is in favor of the Secret Ballot Reform bill. Evidently the political machine is not giving good satisfaction in this great centre.

It is not likely that Senator Macdonald, of B. C., will pursue his Mormon bill further, now that Sir John Thompson's criminal bill covers essentially the same ground as the other. That part of the Minister of Justice's bill relating to the question of plural marriages makes it a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for two years or fine of \$500, or both, to practice by the rites or ceremonies of any denomination or what are commonly known among Mormons as spiritual or plural marriages. This penalty also includes any one who celebrates, is a party to, or assists in any such rite or ceremony which purports to make binding or to sanction any of such sexual relationships, procures, enforces or is a party to the compliance with any such form, rule or custom which so purports, or procures or enforces the execution of any such form of contract which so purports, or the giving of any such consent in all such cases. The lawful husband or wife of the defendant shall be a competent but not a compellable witness for or against the defendant.

The enormous annual expense of keeping up Rideau Hall has led the public Accounts Committee of the present session to inquire more particularly into the system adopted in its management. Two features of the system have been strongly condemned by Members of Parliament, the lack of checks on the furniture and furnishings of the Hall to prevent the public property being stolen periodically; and the looseness with which transactions with the Hall have been carried on—the requisition drawn upon the Department being accepted without any question of scrutiny. As a result of the former it is suspected that many valuable articles of furniture and furnishings have been spirited away during the absence of their guardians from the Hall, and especially during the period intervening between the going and coming of successive Governors-General. It would seem that those who have been committing these larcenies have imbibed the heresy which, unfortunately, is not confined to those connected with the vice-regal establishment, that it is no sin to steal from the Government. That this state of things will be modified, has been promised by Sir Hector Langevin, who announced that a special account would be opened with Rideau Hall and an inventory taken of all the goods in the Hall as a check against loss.

If one could be certain that the request would be granted, for a commission of enquiry to bring to light the proceedings of

the Public Works Department relating to the new Parliament buildings, the challenge of Hon. Mr. Fraser to have such a commission appointed to scrutinize his actions would be a very strong argument in favor of his official integrity and uprightness. But it is just this little if that thrusts itself in and tempers the conclusion based upon the bold challenge of the Commissioner. It is quite possible, and indeed very probable that the wholesale charges of jobbery and wrongdoing, so frequently laid at his door, would be shown to be utterly baseless; and that Mr. Fraser is prepared to give a frank and full explanation of all his actions connected with that important contract, even to the passing over of Toronto architects in favor of a foreigner; nevertheless the vindication must be based on other grounds than his reply to Mr. Creighton, "I tell him he can have a commission, and can have the opportunity of proving what he has charged. I stake my reputation on the result."

It is a desirable accomplishment to be able to draw a distinction and to distinguish between things that differ, but the ability to make a distinction without a difference is of no particular advantage to a public man in his dealings with the ordinary lay mind. And if the latter class is the distinction made by Mr. Creighton the other day in criticizing the actions of the minister of Public Works, it will be beyond the comprehension of minds unschooled in hair-splitting, to understand how jobbing, corruption and wrong doing can be laid at the door of a department without inculcating the head of the department, and practically charging him with all that is alleged against his department. Rather will the ordinary mortal agree with the Hon. member in his reply, "He charges me with having connived at jobbery. It would be no excuse for me to say, 'I did not put the plunder in my pocket. I allowed someone else to steal, but I did not steal myself.'"

Referring to the so-called game of the Ministerial party at Ottawa, to fritter away the early part of the session, and at the end rush through, without proper discussion, all kinds of imperfect legislation and imperfect measures, the *Globe* feels called upon to give the Opposition a few words of counsel in the matter: "They should make every effort to frustrate the intention of the Government and to teach them a much-needed lesson. It often happens that members of Parliament are not able to remain at Ottawa through the whole of a protracted session. Where this is the case with Liberal members they should, by arrangement with the Whips or otherwise, contrive to leave the Capital for a period sufficiently long to arrange their private business, and then come back prepared to stay as long as is necessary at the last for the full discussion of every measure that comes before the House." Unquestionably the "Opposition should arrange their private business so as to stay as long as necessary for the full discussion of every measure that comes before the House," and so should every member of Parliament, whether Grit or Tory. Have they not been sent to Ottawa for this very purpose? Did they not pledge their sacred honor to attend to the country's business when they offered themselves as candidates? Would it be a popular request? In more and more science of our day, it is not felt any more, and with the duties to which a public man is called, care is to fill with his Catholic duties in order to be beaten.

To say that such counsel is necessary is a reflection upon the honesty and uprightness of our rulers. Where is the ground for hope that just and righteous laws will be enacted if our legislators consider their promises lightly, and treat with indifference their sacred obligations to those they represent?

Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory results of the conference recently held between the city's representatives and the railway magnates, Sir Joseph Hickson and President Van Horne, the viaduct project is not a dead issue, nor are the promoters of the scheme ready to acknowledge its impracticability and cease their efforts. Owing to the Star Chamber character of the conference, the public has never had a full report of what took place on that occasion, but from Mr. Gurney, chairman of the committee, it is learned that both the railroad representatives object to the scheme as being impracticable both as to the cost of construction and the cost of working. Mr. Hickson stated that it would be necessary to raise \$250,000 per annum as an equivalent for all damages resulting to his railway company from the adoption of the viaduct scheme. While the C. P. R. did not make any statement as to the actual cost, they inclined to the opinion that the damage to them would be somewhat similar. This estimate is repudiated by Mr. A. M. Wellington, the eminent New York engineer, who has furnished the viaduct committee with two reports regarding the scheme, one based on a four track structure, the other on a two track way. In the latter, made since the conference with the railroad representatives, he says the extravagance of the statement of Sir Joseph Hickson that the Grand Trunk railway would suffer such operative inconveniences that not only would the G. T. R. be unwilling to pay any rent, but that they would expect the city to pay them a large sum yearly (\$200,000 to \$250,000) as an inducement for them to use the viaduct, should be its own corrective. It will involve certain inconveniences, in themselves disadvantageous, like most of such settlements; but the balance of advantage will be largely in favour of the Grand Trunk railway, and they could therefore afford to pay a good rental for the use of the viaduct.

There is a suspicion, however, that the money consideration is not the principal objection in the minds of the railway men, and that the great *but noir* is the proposition that the city shall control the viaduct. Said Alderman Gillespie the other day: "It is not the viaduct which scares the railway magnates, but the control of the viaduct. I venture to say that if they were offered the privilege of constructing a viaduct of their own they would jump at the chance, and estimates of cost would shrink in a most mysterious manner. What alarms them is that viaduct scheme has as its corner-stone a neutral and independent Esplanade, so far as the railway magnates are concerned. That is what they fear."