

in the schools. Second, whatever changes in school laws and regulations may or may not be desirable, the only means by which the most effective training, moral and religious, can be secured is already in the hands of parents and trustees, in their power to secure, at whatever cost, in the teachers of their choice, those intellectual, moral, and religious qualities with which, under any conditions, and without which under no conditions, can such moral and religious training be secured. Under any circumstances, the moral and religious character of the schools will be determined by the teachers, and so by the trustees who select the teachers, and so by the parents who elect the trustees.

WILL there ever be an end to questions of jurisdiction between the Dominion and the Provinces? Probably not until the Constitution is amended in the direction of a clearer recognition of the full autonomy of the Provinces in local affairs. The question just now before the Chancery Court of Ontario is evidently, if regarded as a question of interpretation, a very nice one. It is, in a word, whether the Legislature of the Province can or cannot, under the Constitution, give to its Lieutenant-Governor "the power of commuting and remitting sentences for offences against the laws of this Province, or offences over which the Legislative authority of the Province extends." The argument before the Court by two of the most profound and acute legal minds in the Dominion, was, in itself, an interesting event. From the somewhat meagre summaries given in the newspapers, it is pretty clear that the two set out from different premises and followed distinct lines of reasoning, and that each was successful in drawing his conclusion from his premises. Mr. Blake, taking a broad and common-sense view of the principles of interpretation to be followed in such a case, set in a clear light the absurdity of supposing that the authority to pass laws does not carry with it the right to provide for their administration. Mr. Robinson, on the other hand, demonstrated, scarcely less conclusively, that according to the Constitution the Province has power to deal only with those matters which are specially and specifically committed to its charge, and that the exercise of the pardoning power is not one of the matters thus handed over to it. To the lay mind it seems tolerably clear that between these two lines of argument is to be found the gist of the whole dispute. If the British North America Act is interpreted with strict regard to the letter of its clauses it is not easy to see how Mr. Robinson's conclusion can be escaped. If it is to be interpreted in a broad spirit, as Mr. Blake contends it should be, with special regard to its general meaning and intention, the right of the Province in the case in hand must be sustained. Whatever the decision of the three Canadian judges, it is highly probable that the case will have to be finally settled by the British Privy Council. At least, it is not at all likely that Mr. Mowat, in view of his previous successes, would submit without appeal to a decision unfavourable to his claims; though it is possible that Sir John A. Macdonald, whose views in regard to provincial rights and powers seem of late to have undergone a marked expansion, might accept a judgment favourable to Mr. Mowat's contention. What could he lose by doing so?

MR. MOWAT having been sustained at the polls, the usual unseemly sequences of a successful contest are beginning to appear. The party workers are receiving their rewards. Appointments and rumours of appointments to offices vacant or specially created, are rife in political circles. The bestowment of a lucrative office upon a retired member of the Government is bad enough, though, where the man is thoroughly competent for the office, there is something to be said in its defence. The appointment of a political partizan, who may have been defeated in the struggle, or who may have displayed special zeal and activity as a party worker, to an office for which he has no special fitness, is utterly indefensible. Should it be in any case that by such appointment an untrained or incompetent man is foisted into a position, over the heads of trained and faithful servants who must still be relied on to do the work, it can only be said that such a mode of rewarding a follower, though unhappily very common under a party system, is really a betrayal of the interests of the public. Mr. Mowat will not probably follow the old practice to such disgraceful lengths as other Premiers have often done. The pity is that he should follow it at all. Two large rewards, in the approbation of his own conscience, and the approval of all highminded citizens, await the successful Premier who shall have courage and principle enough to

discard the unworthy practice entirely and inaugurate a grand reform by making all appointments to office on the principle of merit alone, irrespective alike of personal services and of party preferences. We fear the hour and the man have not yet come.

PURSUANT to the earnest request of the Prisoners' Aid Association of the Province, seconded by resolutions passed by the representatives of the various Churches in their annual meetings, the Government of Ontario is about to appoint a Commission to investigate and report on the subject of prison reform. This is a praiseworthy movement. Few questions are more difficult or more worthy of profound study than that of the best mode of dealing with the prisoners in our gaols and penitentiaries, whether they be hardened convicts or youthful transgressors who have just made their entrance into the criminal ranks. The century is now too far advanced to admit of any but the best and most intelligent modes of treatment being used by any enlightened and Christian people. The day is past when simple punishment, legal vengeance, was regarded as the chief or sole object of imprisonment. The day is past, too, let us hope, when a criminal was regarded as a criminal, and little or no account was taken of heredity, environment, age, temptation, and the various other circumstances which really set one convict wide as the poles apart from another, so far as either the degree of guilt, or the hope of reformation is concerned. Few changes of opinion and practice more clearly indicate advance in civilization and the science of sociology, than that which substitutes the reform of the prisoner, and the well-being of society, for simple vengeance, as the leading motives to be kept in view in dealing with convicted prisoners. The science of penology, though it has made great advances, is yet in its infancy. It is the duty of every Government to encourage its study, and there is no better way of encouraging such study than by the employment of properly qualified men to collect and arrange available facts and statistics, examine the most approved methods and give them to the public. The names of Inspector Langmuir and Dr. Rosebrugh, which have been announced as on the list of commissioners to be chosen, will meet with general approval. Mr. Anglin, as an experienced journalist, may be able to render good service. But as the Commission is yet incomplete we may be permitted to suggest that, in order to the best results, it should contain at least one who has had practical and successful experience as governor of a gaol or penitentiary. Such a man would be sure to detect both merits and defects in systems examined, which would escape the notice of any but an expert.

BY the decisive and emphatic vote of Saturday, the Toronto City Council has been empowered to use the option secured to it, on the expiration of the charter of the Street Railway Company in March next, and buy, on such terms as may hereafter be made, the real and personal property of the Company. The vote of 5,385 to 427 shows that there is no doubt in the minds of the citizens as to the direction in which their interests lie. Public opinion is being rapidly educated in these days in regard to the folly of permitting private companies to control monopolies of this kind and grow rich at the expense of the whole body of citizens. At first thought one feels disposed to wonder how a long charter arrangement could have been made in the first place. But then we remember that in the beginning such undertakings are usually regarded as doubtful investments, and entered upon with caution. It is but just that those who were ready to undertake a risk which the city itself would have shrank from incurring should reap a liberal reward of their courage and enterprise. This the Company in question has no doubt done, and now that the contract is expiring the matter becomes one of simple business calculation. That calculation has clearly shown that the monopoly is too valuable, and the interests and convenience of the citizens too deeply involved to admit of any renewal of the charter. It was, we observe, thought necessary by the advocates of the By-law which has now been so heartily passed, to assure the rate-payers that the Council has no intention of retaining the management of the railway in its own hands. The purpose is to lease it for short terms to responsible companies who will be bound, of course, to run it on such conditions as may be thought fair and advantageous to citizens. This arrangement is no doubt wisest under the circumstances. With our present loose and disjointed municipal machinery nothing else could be thought of. It by no means follows that at some

future day, when the self-governing abilities of the citizens of Toronto shall have proved equal to the task of devising a simple and thoroughly effective system of municipal administration, it may not be found practicable to have all such monopolies directly managed by and for the city. Many cities are now trying such experiments on a more or less limited scale, and in many cases, we believe, with gratifying results. It would be hard to show, on abstract principles, why street railways and gas and electric lights and similar services may not be carried on directly for the benefit of citizens, with as much propriety and advantage as, for instance, the distribution of water.

SEVERAL executions have taken place, during the last week or two, in different parts of the country. The descriptions of these which have appeared in the public press bring afresh to the minds of thoughtful persons the enquiry whether such horrible scenes can be necessary in the interest of justice, or conducive to the well-being of society. Two distinct questions are suggested—that of the death penalty itself, and that of the mode of its infliction. If we are agreed, as a majority of our readers probably are, that capital punishment, in cases of atrocious murder, is a sad but stern necessity—a duty which organized society owes to itself and to its individual members—we can scarcely doubt that so revolting a mode of inflicting it, as that of hanging, must inevitably tend, in proportion to the public growth in humanity and refinement of feeling, to discredit the penalty itself and strengthen the cry for its abolition. In any case, therefore, it seems highly desirable that some less harrowing mode should be found and adopted. There are surely many such modes, though we need not now further shock our readers' sensibilities by discussing them. The test question, it seems to us, is this: Does the method at present in use produce the effect upon the mind of the spectators, or of those who read the descriptions in the newspapers, that it is designed to produce, or that it is desirable should be produced? Is the general impression that of solemn warning, or of just and awful retribution? Does not rather the sensation of the horrible and the revolting drown every other, and leave behind a suggestion of that which is cruel, loathsome, or barbarous, in association with the task of the ministers of justice? How else are we to account for the fact that the proper executive officer invariably shrinks from the personal discharge of his duty, and that his wretched proxy becomes an object of general execration? We know not how it may appear to others, but to us it seems clear that the Governments of English-speaking States will shortly have to choose between the substitution of some less revolting mode of execution and the abolition of the death penalty itself.

DURING the greater part of next week Toronto will be in holiday attire, receiving and entertaining, to the best of her ability, the multitudes who are expected to honour with their presence her first attempt at a carnival. There seems every reason to expect a large influx of visitors. The city is in the happy position of being able, with pardonable self-complacency, to invite strangers from all quarters to see the evidences of her remarkable growth and prosperity. No doubt she will be on her best behaviour, and will sustain the high reputation for orderliness and decorum which she has already acquired. While these great gatherings give a temporary impulse to trade and thus are not without material advantage, it would be well if they could also be made useful in other respects, for instance, in stimulating to greater effort those responsible for the tidiness and cleanliness, not only of the public streets but of the back lanes and by-ways of the city. While our citizens can point their visitors with pride to some evidences of enlightened and energetic civic administration, there are unfortunately other matters about which the more intelligent will feel disposed to say as little as possible. For instance, should any curious stranger happen to ask, How do you dispose of the immense quantities of household refuse and sewage which must be produced every day in such a city? the shrewd entertainer will do well to change the subject as soon as possible, and direct attention to the schools, universities, public buildings, charitable institutions, etc. Should his interrogator be disagreeably persistent and insist on a definite answer, how the intelligent citizen will blush as he finds himself forced to confess that we simply dump the refuse in festering heaps on the outskirts of the city, and pour back the sewage in foul rivulets to pollute the fountain from which we take our water supplies, and to defile the water front which should be one of our most charming places of resort.