

admit that a general demonetization of silver would be ruinous to the world, and yet they refuse to discuss the subject of a common standard, which, if the principal commercial nations of the world could be brought to agree on, might be established without much difficulty. The causes of failure in the attempts to establish a bi-metallic currency are obvious. The United States when it established the value of silver at 16 to 1 of gold, knowing that in France it was 15½ to 1, practically established a gold standard, just as if it had made gold the only legal tender. At the present time it is practically of little importance whether the ratio were established at 16 or 15½ to 1, but it is of the highest importance that whatever ratio should be fixed on, it should be uniform. The experience of France is that by suspending the coinage of silver during its depreciation, it prevented any inconvenience to its people. Had it not suspended coinage, the silver of Germany would have been poured into France. If the nations of the world could agree on a bi-metallic currency, it would be easy to supplement the agreement by one to suspend temporarily the coinage of either metal in case of depreciation. As to India, Mr. Weston is clearly right in thinking that it should in the meantime adhere to its sole silver standard. It does not suffer more than all other debtors in having to pay its creditors in gold.

#### THE NEW QUEBEC MINISTRY.

It must be admitted that there has been ample ground for the criticisms which have been very generally made on the recent *bouleversement* of the Chapleau Government. It is one of those events that literally takes one's breath away. As regards the principal character, Mr. Chapleau, there is nothing very extraordinary in his preferring a portfolio in the Dominion Cabinet to his premiership in Quebec; and if, in the ordinary course of events, he had resigned his position in Quebec, and accepted office in the Dominion, there would really be nothing in the circumstance to call for special remark. We learn from the English Ministerial Organ in Montreal, that there is to be a new shuffle of the Dominion Cabinet, and the announcement is made, as if there had been no important change, but merely that "it may be interesting to recapitulate the offices of the Ministers." It appears that the Hon. Mr. Macpherson is to hold two offices, to which adequate salaries are attached, viz., Speaker of the Legislative Council and President of the Executive Council. Hon. Frank Smith is to occupy a seat "without

portfolio, as did Mr. Blake." Mr. Smith has been a successful merchant, and doubtless much prefers giving his chief attention to his own business, but to compare him to Mr. Blake is simply ridiculous. Mr. Blake lent his influence as a recognized political leader to the Government of Mr. Mackenzie, while Mr. Smith is wholly unknown as a party leader, and has been appointed simply to gratify a certain following in Ontario, who must be thankful for small favors, if they accept Mr. Smith without a portfolio as their Cabinet representative. We presume that the *Gazette's* programme is correct, but it is to be lamented that Sir John Macdonald has allowed another opportunity to pass without taking the Presidency of the Council, which is clearly the office that ought to be held by the First Minister, so as to enable him to exercise proper supervision over all the other departments.

We confess that we labor under some difficulty in treating the subject of the change of Ministry in Quebec. We have no precedent to guide us. On the face of the transaction it appears that Messrs. Chapleau & Mousseau, with reference to their personal wishes and interests, effected an exchange of offices with or without conditions. It is simply inconceivable that, if Mr. Chapleau had resigned his Quebec premiership, the Lieutenant-Governor would have charged with the formation of a new administration a gentleman who was not a Member of either branch of the Legislature, and who is not known to possess the political confidence of the members of either of the Houses. It has always been deemed by the Commons of Great Britain a most dangerous thing to establish even doubtful precedents. It would be difficult to find a precedent for an act which seems to have been accepted as a matter of course by men that it would have been imagined would have repelled with utter scorn the invitation from an individual who, in virtue of a private arrangement, was placed in a position either to turn out of office Ministers who, we are bound to assume, possessed public confidence, or to retain them as mere clerks to obey a new master.

The new Premier has discarded two of the late colleagues of his predecessor and has substituted others in their place. There has been no political crisis, and, so far as the public are aware, there was no difference between those dismissed and those retained. It has been rumored that the dismissed Ministers are to be provided for by permanent appointments, but if such should be the case it will only

add to the disgrace of the transaction. If, on the other hand, they are not to be provided for, then the *onus* lies on the Ministers who have coolly deserted colleagues with whom they had been acting in perfect amity, up to the last moment. The whole transaction is so extraordinary, so completely at variance with the principles of the constitution which we have adopted as our guide, that it is really difficult to characterize it; and we must patiently abide events. It has been suggested that the chief object of the change was to reconcile a section of the Conservative party which had been dissatisfied with the railroad policy of the Government. There is certainly no ground furnished for this suggestion in the appointments actually made. It might be imagined that the removal of Messrs. Paquet & Flynn who deserted the Liberal party, on no apparent ground but to obtain office, would be acceptable to the Conservatives, had not Mr. Starnes been invited to join the new Government. Mr. Starnes was not only a member of the Joly Government, but he continued a member of the party after the desertions which caused its overthrow. He then became an advocate of coalition, and may probably imagine that his own adhesion to the new Conservative Government establishes the fact of a coalition.

There has been no recent justifiable ground for coalition in Quebec, and nothing tends more to shake confidence in the integrity of statesmen than the desertion of a political party for personal objects. When men leave one political party and join another without any reason, except that they may themselves obtain office, they simply sell themselves for office. Coalitions are only justifiable when no other means can be found for carrying on a Government satisfactorily. There may be three distinct parties, two of which, by combining, may render it impossible for the other to carry on the Government, or there may be two parties nearly of the same strength, such as existed in the Quebec Legislature after the dissolution advised by Mr. Joly. That clearly was a case in which, if possible, coalition should have been resorted to. The Administration was sustained by the casting vote of the Speaker, who had been elected as an opponent of the party which selected him. Mr. Joly committed a fatal mistake in attempting to carry on the Government by the casting vote of the Speaker in one House, and with a majority against him in the other. He should have placed his own resignation in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor, and should have advised him to entrust the formation of a new Administration to