

effect that what is wanted in order to give stability to business is not the gold itself but the confidence which is the result of knowing that all exchanges are made on a gold basis. The great bulk of the world's business will still be done on credit, and neither nations, nor banks, nor private individuals will care to hoard the metal itself, so long as they know that their media of exchange actually represent it. Thus, it is argued, the adoption of the gold standard by the United States will not necessarily call for any large increase in the quantity required for business purposes, and so will not tend to create the predicted scarcity of the precious metal.

### THE FALL CAMPAIGN.

Judging from present indications the coming Fall is likely to be marked in Canada by a political activity unwonted in a season when an election is not looming on the horizon. The oratorical struggle may be said to have commenced with the Liberal Convention some weeks ago, but, owing to the absence of the Premier and some of his most active colleagues in Paris, the Liberal leaders have hitherto had the field pretty much to themselves. They have made good use of the opportunity in various parts of the Dominion. When Mr. Laurier shall have completed his projected tour in Ontario, the views of the Opposition on the tariff and other questions will have been presented with a fulness and ability that can scarcely fail to have some effect. Meanwhile Sir John Thompson and his colleagues have returned and the former is, it is said, about to follow in the track of his eloquent opponent, with a view of counteracting the effect of the latter's addresses and those of his associates. He, too, will no doubt be aided by some of his most eloquent colleagues. All this is as it should be. Such addresses as the two leaders may be expected to make are one of the most powerful educational agencies that can be brought into play. The electors of Canada would be wise to hear both sides, weigh the arguments brought forward and calmly draw their own conclusions.

This campaign should be the beginning of better methods in Canadian politics. The practice which has been hitherto followed to too great an extent of leaving everything until the eve of an election, and then bringing all kinds of influences, legitimate and illegitimate, to bear upon the electors, is demoralizing. The excitement which is sure to be created by such a campaign is unfavorable alike to dispassionate discussion and to deliberate weighing of arguments. The temptations to hold out inducements are often too strong for the virtue of many politicians and voters. While the date of the coming election is still in the uncertain future, such temptations are reduced to the minimum on both sides.

There is some reason to hope that a more earnest and thoughtful spirit is abroad in the land than that which has prevailed for some years past. The revelations of the last census, combined with the obvious lack of growth and progress in most of the villages and towns of the Dominion, notwithstanding its unquestionable richness in natural resources, is compelling serious thought, and is fastening upon many who had pinned their faith to the National Policy the conviction that something is wrong with our fiscal system. Now is the time for all thoughtful men to enquire, to investigate, to deliberate, and to resolve. The speeches of the Minister of Finance, and the tone of some of the leading Conservative newspapers would seem to indicate that the Government is wedded to its protective policy. It remains to be seen whether the Premier, who alone can speak with full authority, will shut his eyes to the evidences of failure and reaction, and endorse that position. We make bold to doubt it. Pledged as the Government is to take some measure of tariff reform, its future will, we believe, depend very largely upon the spirit in which it carries out that pledge. Such statements as that lately prepared by the farmers of the North-West cannot be safely ignored by the head of a Government so pledged. The policy which compels the tillers of the soil, who are at the best toiling under many disadvantages, to pay a heavy toll either to the Ontario manufacturer or to the Government, on his lumber, twine, coal oil, fencing wire, and above all on his ploughs and reapers and binders is a policy which can hardly be submitted to indefinitely by the free and intelligent people of the prairies. And this is but a sample of the class of questions which are now before the people of the Dominion and which the Premier and his colleagues will be obliged to discuss. That they will be discussed to the full by the Opposition may be taken for granted. We shall await with interest the utterances of Sir John Thompson on the tariff question.

### CHANGING ONE'S MIND.

An old proverb says: "To confess that one has changed his mind is but to admit that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday." Assuming the change to be honest and the result of larger knowledge of the particular question or maturer thought in regard to it, the saw is manifestly true. And yet there is a prevailing sentiment which often makes it one of the keenest reproaches which can be brought against a public man to quote some expression of opinion at a former period which is in contradiction with one more recently expressed. True, the censure is usually confined to those who hold the discarded, not the newly embraced opinion. Nevertheless, how often does the person against whom the reproach of inconsistency, and, by implication at

least, of insincerity, is brought, think it incumbent upon him to resort to subtle and doubtful explanations in the attempt to show that the earlier expression is not correctly reported, or that it did not mean what the words seem to convey, but is susceptible of quite another turn. Why is it that, as a rule, we are so loth to admit frankly that our former opinions or convictions with regard to certain questions have undergone changes more or less radical as we have grown older? There is, perhaps, scarcely a greater foe to truth than this false pride in consistency, this reluctance to admit that we were formerly wrong, or now believe that we were, in regard to certain important principles or doctrines? There is not, we venture to say, one of our readers whose views on many subjects have not undergone very material modifications within the last twenty, fifteen, ten, yes, even five years. There is not one of us who will not ten years hence, should he live so long, have materially changed some opinions which he now cherishes as convictions. Possibly we are making the assertion too general. A great student of human nature has told us that there are men who, when once they have grown fond of an opinion will call it honor, honesty and faith and cling to it as to dear life itself. We ourselves have met with persons of good ability and high standing who, however candidly and dispassionately they might, in the first instance, examine a question upon which it was necessary for them to declare themselves, having once committed themselves to a given view, made it a matter of pride, almost of conscience, to retain that opinion ever afterwards. Said opinion; duly stamped and ticketed, was systematically laid away in its proper pigeon-hole in the mental storehouse, with the distinct understanding that it was a finished product, subject to no reconsideration or amendment, always ready when called for. Such a method has its conveniences and saves a vast amount of time and perplexity to a busy man, but it does not produce exactly the kind of creed to which one would like to pin his faith as sure to be in accordance with the evidence up to date.

Reflections such as these will bring at once to the minds of most readers the curious mental history of one who, while in many respects the most remarkable, and in the political world at least, the foremost among living men, has probably changed his mental attitude and his political creed more continuously and completely than any other public man now living. It is characteristic of his changes, too, as of those of most men, that they have been so gradual that he himself has been in a large measure unconscious of them, and often unwilling to admit their existence. This is a very common experience. What is far less usual, in fact extremely rare, is that his changes even up to extreme old age have been uniformly and steadily in the direction of radicalism, there-