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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE published minutes of a meeting of the Senate of Toronto University, held on Friday, the 13th inst., contain some strange and not very creditable revelations, especially with reference to the manner in which provision was made at large expense for the accommodation of the new Medical Department in the biological building. The history is still shrouded in a haze of mystery, so far as the responsibility for the construction and internal arrangements of the additions to the said building are concerned, and it is clearly the duty of some one to insist on having fuller light on the subject. From the information furnished in reply to questions asked by Mr. MacLean, it appears that though the rooms, or some of them, were being constructed mainly, if not expressly, for the use of the Medical Department, this fact was carefully concealed from the Senate, when the plans were submitted for its approval. These plans contained no indications that any portion of the building was intended for medical purposes. Indeed, in a letter to the Registrar, dated May 11, 1892, the architect wrote: "I was instructed not to put names on the rooms used for anatomical purposes, because, as I understood, of a possibility of objection being made by the residents in the neighbourhood." Who was responsible for these directions, and for this not very honourable attempt to deceive, does not appear, though the architect says: "My instructions were generally received through Professor Ramsay Wright." A letter from the Minister of Education, read at the same meeting, seems to imply quite distinctly that the Minister was misled in regard to the alleged facts which induced him to give his sanction to the lease of the lots on College Street for hospital purposes. It is unnecessary to say that it is of the utmost importance, if a public institution is to retain the confidence and sympathy of the people and their representatives in the Assembly, that everything in connection with its management should be open and above board. It is pretty clear that in this case the zeal of some one in the interests of the newly-established Medical Department overstepped the bounds not only of discretion but of common candour. So much having been brought to light,

neither the Senate, the Legislature, nor the public should be content until the full history of this somewhat mysterious business is made clear, and the responsibility placed upon the right shoulders.

CANADA'S political reputation was not too high before, and some of the scenes which were enacted last week in Committee of the whole at Ottawa will scarcely improve the estimation in which our Government and Parliament are held abroad. Nor do they tend to increase our self-respect at home. It is hard to know just what to say in reference to such unseemly contests as those which took place over the appropriations for public buildings at La Prairie, St. Henri, etc. The opposition cry "Bribery!" and the Government supporters cry "Obstruction!" and both cries seem to be well founded. That it is impossible to defend, on any sound principle, such appropriations as those referred to can hardly be denied. In fact serious defence was, so far as appears from the newspaper reports, scarcely attempted. What is the duty of the Government's critics in such a case? What course would a dignified and strong Opposition, like that in the Mother Country to which our public men are so fond of looking for precedents, take, under such circumstances? It is impossible to say, for no such case could arise in England. It is simply inconceivable that an English Ministry could lay itself open to such a charge as that of using the public funds either to purchase or to reward political support. Believing, as even the more independent supporters of the Government, such as Col. O'Brien, do, that such a use of public funds is wrong and indefensible, it is clearly the duty as well as the pleasure of the Opposition to denounce and oppose it to the utmost of their ability, by all proper and constitutional means. Whether they would not better serve their own ends and make a better impression on the country, by putting their remonstrances and denunciations on record in a few vigorous speeches and then reserving their oratorical thunder for the public platform, is a question worthy of their consideration. The rejoinder which was made by more than one friend of the party in power, that the cost of the prolonged debate is greater than that of the objectionable items, is of course no answer to the Liberal arguments. But it catches the ear of the people, who do not always stay to make even obvious distinctions. One thing is made very clear to the independent mind, and that is the radical defectiveness of the system which makes it the duty of the partisan Ministers to distribute the public funds in this way. It is easy to talk about their responsibility to Parliament and to the public, but where the final decision is reached in every case by the party vote, to what does the responsibility amount save that "to the victors belong the spoils"? Does any person really suppose that the public money is now expended in the localities where it is most needed?

THE Civil Service Commissioners, in their report now before Parliament, make several recommendations which must commend themselves to all who desire to see the baneful influence of partyism as far as possible eliminated from the public service. The two principal changes recommended—the establishment of a permanent Civil Service Commission, and appointment by open competition—could scarcely fail to work a most desirable reform in every department of the service. It would be a happy omen should the leaders of both parties consent for once to give over their bickerings and put their heads together to perfect a system the effect of which would be to relieve the Government of the day of the patronage which must now be one of the greatest vexations as well as one of the chief temptations of an honest Minister, and to permit the business of the Dominion to be transacted on purely business principles. We fear, however, that this is too much to hope for at present. As to the proposed Board of Commissioners, it is hard to see on what ground reasonable objection can be made, unless on that of expense. But can anyone doubt that such a Commission, if properly constituted, would save the country many times the amount of the salaries of its members? The statements made in the report in regard to the methods of doing work, and of making promotions and increases of salary, which now prevail, are very suggestive on that point.

There are, perhaps, more serious objections to appointment of officials on the competitive principle, inasmuch as many other qualities are needed to make an efficient officer or clerk, besides those which can be ascertained by a competitive examination. Yet the results of such examination, combined with a proper regard to experience and proved efficiency in making promotions, would, probably, afford on the whole the best practicable method of securing the most efficient service. All parties would now, we think, admit that the appointment of an Auditor-General wholly independent of the Ministry was one of the best administrative reforms ever made in Canada. There is little room for doubt that the appointment of a Civil Service Board, with a thoroughly qualified officer at its head, to work in connection with deputy heads, all alike independent of the Ministers of the day, would prove still more advantageous to the public service of the country, in proportion to the wider sphere of its operations.

SINCE the paragraph on "Bribery and Obstruction" was written, our attention has been directed to one of the minor recommendations of the Civil Service Commission which is of special interest in that connection. Calling attention to "the system pursued of erecting buildings for post offices in comparatively small places," and the unwarranted expense involved, the report proceeds: "Your Commissioners would submit this matter for the consideration of the Government, so that some system may be adopted, limiting the erection of such structures to places only where the revenues collected warrant the outlay." Nothing could be more reasonable or just than to lay down some fixed principle, such as that thus recommended, and adhere to it. Why not go a little further and remove this detail of administration also from the control of Ministers and put it into the hands of the Civil Service Commission? As the time of these Commissioners would not perhaps be very fully occupied, they could ascertain the necessary facts connected with each application, and the Government, in recommending to Parliament only such outlays as had received the approval of the Commission, after due investigation, would be freed from the suspicion of and temptation to favouritism and other partisan motives in making such recommendations. Rightly viewed, the appropriation of the public funds for such purposes involves very serious responsibilities from which conscientious Ministers would, one might suppose, gladly be relieved. Few things in politics or morals are more surprising than the readiness with which men who, in private life, would make the administration of trust funds a matter of the most scrupulous care and conscientiousness, will violate in the most open manner the clearest principles of justice and fairness when the money belongs to the public and partisan interests are at stake. Had the Premier and Sir John Thompson retained their first ardour for reform, as exhibited last session, we should not have been without strong hope of seeing most of the recommendations of the Commission for the reform of glaring abuses readily adopted, with excellent effect upon the tone of political life in the Dominion. In view of the manifest cooling of their zeal for purification, we shall, we confess, be agreeably surprised if the more important of the changes recommended by their own Commission be found to receive their approval. We doubt whether a more open avowal of an utterly indefensible principle of distribution of Governmental administration was ever made by a responsible Minister than that enunciated by the Minister of Public Works when he declared, if correctly reported, that "when in office the Liberals had served their friends first, and there was no objection to that course. This Government also proceeded upon the same principle, which was one the public would not condemn." Will not the public condemn it? If not, alas for such a state of public opinion and morals!

AMIDST many discouraging tendencies, there are signs on the political horizon which are distinctly hopeful. Amongst these is the fact that not only have the independent journals with refreshing unanimity condemned the Redistribution Bill now before Parliament, on account of its amazingly ugly "gerrymandering" features, but