

The Week.

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THE Le Sueur case, in which the accused, a post office employé, is charged with stealing money from letters, has again on the second trial ended in the way we predicted it would. The jury stood ten for conviction, and two against—the two, being Montreal men, standing firm, and refusing to yield to argument or reason, although one of them told the Court that while it was clear to him that the stolen money was found on the prisoner, he did not believe that the prisoner had stolen it or had known it was stolen. It is to the honour of the four French-Canadian *habitants* on the jury that in this trial they voted with the six English-speaking jurors, so the reproach of being biassed by race considerations clearly does not attach to them. But with respect to the others, can our French-Canadian friends feel surprised that Ontario magistrates hesitate to commit any one to the chances of such "justice?" If the accused person is to be tried by a Montreal jury, and found guilty, or acquitted, not according to the merits of the case, but according to his nationality, mere justice demands that he shall not be exposed to such a travesty of a trial.

WE fear the Inter-Provincial Conference has laid itself open to the just imputation of being a mere representative gathering of the Party in Opposition to the Dominion Government. Most of the delegates are in Opposition, of course, as representing Liberal Provincial Governments, but nevertheless they might have met in conference and discussed the affairs of the Provinces, and even of the Dominion, without expressing the markedly Opposition tone of some of their resolutions. And there was no need for them to go out of their way to express an opinion on Commercial Union, which is a subject wholly beyond the scope of Provincial powers, that cannot be considered as a factor in any question at issue between the Dominion and Provincial Governments. As fitly might the Conference have passed a resolution respecting the tariff, the Governor-General's salary, or the maintenance of an Agent-General in England; this interference in what is exclusively a Dominion concern cannot but be regarded as purely an Opposition *ballon d'essai*, let loose in such a way that the party is not responsible if it collapses. But indeed the whole tenor of the resolutions is distinctly aggressive towards the Federal Government, which it is plainly desired to reduce to the rank of a mere central committee, executing the will of the several independent Provinces.

IN recommending Commercial Union, the Conference by implication condemned the National Policy; in doing which they certainly ran counter to the opinion of the country, as expressed at the polls a few months ago—thus affording additional evidence that the Conference really was actuated by mere partyism, or at most sectionalism. This is much to be regretted, because under a healthy political system in Canada there should be no radical opposition between the Federal and Provincial Legislatures; the one should be a reflex and epitome of the others; with a practically common franchise, any divergence between the two authorities should be purely accidental, and therefore non-enduring; and the present spectacle of a majority of the Provincial Governments setting about to reform the Dominion Government ought to be in the highest degree an improbability. Nevertheless, here we have the chiefs of the Provincial Governments, the elected representatives of the people in one sphere of government, condemning those who are equally the representatives of the people in another sphere. Does it never occur to these gentlemen that if the Dominion Government assumes powers that do not belong to it or pursues a policy the country disapproves, the remedy lies practically in the hands of the very same electors from whom they themselves, the protesters, hold their mandate? They are not elected to redress the balance between the Dominion and Provincial authorities, by reforming the former, but to attend to the affairs of their respective provinces. If reform is needed in the Dominion Government it must be effected direct by the Dominion electorate, not a subordinate authority.

IT is a pity that the Conference did not support its recommendation of Commercial Union by agreeing to give up the Provincial subsidies. If Commercial Union were adopted, there would be a large deficit in the

revenue, to repair which recourse must it would seem be had to direct taxation; and as direct taxation is a special privilege of the Provinces such a stoppage of the subsidies now paid to them out of the Dominion treasury would appear to be the very best means of averting the deficit. As the *Star* justly says, commenting on the proposals of the Conference with respect to the Provincial subsidies, which it regards as no improvement on the system now in operation: "The whole system of Provincial subsidies is vicious. The Provinces should be as far as possible self-supporting. The subsidies come from the people in the shape of taxes, and it is better in every way that the Provinces should themselves raise the money necessary to maintain their respective governmental establishments." This is a good suggestion that might advantageously be adopted without respect to Commercial Union. It would certainly work a vast improvement in one or two of the Provincial Governments; if our worthy friend the *habitant* had had to pay in visible cash for the financial vagaries of the Chapleau-Senecal Government and its immediate successors, there would have been a much earlier change of Government in the Province of Quebec, and that Province would not now have so huge a debt alone to show in place of the railway and other property that mainly caused the outlay but have disappeared from among the assets. To make people feel the cost of government direct out of pocket is a most excellent way to promote good government; corruption and malversation will not long be tolerated when its cost is seen in the outgoing of hard-earned dollars and cents. And so, too, if Commercial Union is seen to involve direct taxation, as it must, there will be an end to its prospects, in Quebec at any rate.

As to the resolution of the Conference asking for the abrogation of the power of Disallowance now vested in the Dominion Government, we refer our readers to an article elsewhere on "Disallowance and the Province of Quebec," which relates some facts that should serve as an impressive warning to any who may be disposed lightly to deprive the minority in the Province of Quebec of the protection afforded by the Federal right of Disallowance. And what is needed in the Province of Quebec may any day be needed equally in any of the other Provinces. What, too, can the English-speaking minority in Quebec think of the proposal that their Legislative Council, which has often done good service for them, shall be abolished by a two-thirds' vote of the French Nationalist Assembly, against whose legislation the Council is almost the sole protection? In connexion with the subject of Upper Chambers, what possible use can be made of the cumbrous scheme now propounded for the reform of the Senate? The principle of Provincial representation in the Senate is unquestionably a sound one; but to mingle with this a selective system like the present, must result in a hybrid that could be no improvement on the present House. The true remedy we believe would be invariably to go outside the rank of politicians for our Senators, and choose, perhaps through the Provincial Parliaments, none but men who have shown their fitness for the Senate by the attainment of eminence in their proper businesses or professions, whatever these may be.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN has given to a New York reporter a further explanation of his attitude towards Commercial Union. He had no opinion to offer as to whether Commercial Union would be a good or a bad thing for Canada; and he had not said that it ought to be prevented. On the contrary, if the majority of the people of Canada desired it, he had no doubt they would be able to secure it; but as it would involve a discrimination against Great Britain in favour of the United States there would be no reason why Great Britain should continue to undertake the responsible duties of defence thrown upon her by her present relations with Canada: Commercial Union would undoubtedly cause the whole of the relationship to be revised. These are plain truths which no reasonable man can deny, whatever their effect on the Parnellite Commercial Union organ. The fact of discrimination against Great Britain under Commercial Union is indeed denied by some, and the willingness of Great Britain to allow a colony to do what would be a hostile act even in a foreign Power is assumed by others; but neither pretension deserves serious consideration. Their mere statement is, we should say, sufficient refutation for any one with an open mind on the subject.

IN his recent speech Mr. Charlton asserted that all our tariff legislation of late years had discriminated against England; which is an argument that has been made to do duty on many platforms to excuse the discrimination proposed under Commercial Union. But the case of the National Policy is radically different from that of Commercial Union. By the protective tariff we excluded as far as possible to a uniform extent all outside Powers alike, as well the States as the mother country; whereas Commercial