

Old prejudices die hard; selfish impulses and instincts still harder. These common-places receive many illustrations in the course of the so-called investigations which are now being held in various parts of the country by the Government's Controllers. The independent as well as the Opposition press has good reason to object to the way in which this business is being carried on. It is doubtful whether in any other self-governing country the people would submit with so little objection to pay the expenses of a Commission the chief object of which was so manifestly to make capital for a party Government. No unprejudiced person can read the reports of the arguments which are carried on between the Controllers and the witnesses who are summoned before them, without feeling that the former, instead of trying to ascertain the unbiased opinion of the people, or to gather facts bearing upon the operation of the tariff, are chiefly intent on impressing their own views upon all concerned. This being the case, the contest is, of course, often a very unequal one between the Controllers, whose business it is to have arguments and statistics at their finger ends, and the majority of the witnesses. Were the arguments adduced straightforward pleas in favor of protection, the country would still have a right to object, for argument was not understood to be the purpose for which the Controllers were appointed, and for which their expenses and salaries are paid by the whole people. No one likes to be taxed for the propagation of views which he honestly believes to be erroneous and mischievous, yet that is what is being done in the case of every free-trader and tariff-reformer in Canada.

But apart from the standard arguments in favor of protection, in the use of which the Controllers are adepts, one is still more impressed with the skill with which they appeal to the national prejudices and selfish instincts of many of those who come before them. For example, with what readiness is the question, "Would you sweep off the Americans?" brought in to imply that in that case we should be giving our neighbors some unfair advantage, just as if the fact that the Americans choose to overload their people with unnecessary taxes were any valid reason why Canadians should impose similar burdens upon themselves. But the question is generally effective, and the witness hastens to disclaim any desire to do anything so unpatriotic as that. Then there is the other set of questions ready to meet the case of those who may have a self-interest in keeping up the price of some special commodity in which they are personally interested. This, again, is usually no less effective. One of the Controllers assured me the other day that he was not trying to puzzle him, but with all respect to these officers we think the majority of un-

prejudiced readers of the evidence will find it hard to resist the conclusion that this is what they are, unconsciously let us hope, actually doing in very many instances. Had they taken an impartial attitude and freely elicited facts and opinions from a large body of intelligent and representative men in all parts of the country, the evidence gathered might have been very instructive and useful. As it is, we confess ourselves at a loss to see what end, save a distinctly partizan one, is to be served by these unequal contests with all witnesses who venture to question the soundness of the tariff as it at present exists.

There has been some pretty severe cross-firing in the Quebec Legislature since the opening of the session. The strong epithets so freely used and the bitterness of party feeling displayed have scarcely added to the dignity of the proceedings. Mr. Mercier is once more in the arena, and his presence does not tend to make the course of legislation smooth. We can readily understand that, with the memory of his record as Premier still fresh, his fiery invective must be a pretty strong irritant to the members of the Government and their party. As we have before said, those who look forward to a peaceful emergence from the inferiority of Colonialism, and an honorable assumption of the responsibilities of nationhood with the full consent of the Mother Land, as the manifest destiny of Canada, or at least the true goal of her ambition, cannot feel that their cause is at all strengthened by Mr. Mercier's advocacy. But they have a right to resent the imputation of disloyalty which is so recklessly flung at the heads of those—among whom are many of the most loyal of Canadians—who have the courage to express their convictions on this point. One might pardon such misrepresentation in the heat of party conflict in the Quebec Legislature, but it is not so easy to forget that no less a person than Sir John Thompson has not been above using the same tactics in some of his campaign speeches. All are pretty well agreed that Canada cannot very much longer, certainly cannot permanently, remain a mere colony. The question of her future course is, then, a fair one for discussion. Those who look forward to an honorable independence may be hoping for the impracticable or the unattainable, but the idea that it is disloyal for a Canadian to advocate Canadian nationality carries its refutation in the simplest statement of its terms.

In one respect the Government of our sister Province, and, in fact, the Province itself, is to be congratulated: We refer to the financial showing. For the first time in we know not how many years the revenue is said to exceed the ordinary expenditure. It is true that there is a good deal of sordidness, perhaps justifiable sordid-

ness, on the part of those upon whom the extraordinary taxes which have made such a report possible have been levied. It is pretty obvious that the burden has been laid to an unfair degree upon the business and enterprise of the cities. The simple truth is, we suppose, that the Government has taken the money from those who had it, but not from all who had it. Had the wealthy ecclesiastical corporations been required to contribute their share there would perhaps be less cause for complaint that the poor *habitants* were allowed to go free. A readjustment of the burden is hinted at, but no reduction is promised. Whatever the hardships to individuals and classes, there is some satisfaction in knowing that the Province is solvent, and that money can be found in it to meet all its liabilities.

### THE NEW EDUCATION.

In the November number of the Popular Educator, an educational monthly published in Boston, Mass., Dr. McLellan, Principal of the Ontario School of Pedagogy, has a trenchant, almost merciless exposure of the fallacies contained in a previous article in the same journal, from the pen of a professor of method in Cook County Normal School. We have not seen the article criticised, but the positions taken as quoted and exposed in Dr. McLellan's article, verge so closely upon the absurd that the only wonder seems to be that the writer of such "bosh," if we may borrow a word from his own vocabulary, should occupy such a position, and have access to the columns of a popular educational paper. It is not likely that many of our readers would care to follow the metaphysical intricacies of such a discussion. Merely by way of justifying our characterization of the article which Dr. McLellan so vigorously assails, we may venture to make a short quotation from it, as given by him:

"Division is dividing a number into a number of equal numbers, as how many *four* apples in twelve apples? I say *three four* apples. I express it thus:  $12 \text{ apples} \div 4 \text{ apples} = 3$  (*four* apples)." Again: "How many hats at \$4 each can I buy with \$12? I say as many hats as there are \$4 in \$12, which are *three four* dollars; here my dividend is dollars, my divisor is dollars and my quotient is three four dollars." Once more: "I have 2-4 of a pie; to how many boys can I give 1-2 pie? In division the dividend and divisor must have the same name. Now, we have  $2-4 \div 1-2 = 1$ . Surely not one whole pie, but one half pie."

Having been carried thus far on this strange road, the reader will not be surprised to find among the inferences drawn by this original thinker, such as the following: (1) In *division* the divisor and dividend have the same name. The quotient is concrete. (2) In *division* the quotient *always* equals the dividend. (3) The divisor cannot be greater than the dividend. (4) The divisor can *never* be an abstract number.