

State for the Colonies recently gave in the British Parliament an explanation of the action of the Commander of H. M. S. Pelican, in forbidding the inhabitants of St. George's Bay, Newfoundland, "to sell herring to any other parties than the French ships in port, or who may arrive in port, until they are baited," or in proclaiming by poster "the price of herring is fixed for the present at one dollar per barrel." Mr. Buxton's answer was that the notice in question was not issued pursuant to any statutory power, but in the exercise of the discretion conferred on the commanders of Her Majesty's ships on the Newfoundland coast. He further stated that the action was taken in the interests and with the approval of the inhabitants; for it would appear that on the arrival of the French fishermen to obtain bait at St. George's Bay the commander got them to agree to purchase it from the Newfoundlanders instead of exercising their treaty right of catching it themselves uninterrupted by competition. Thus, instead of being prevented from fishing while the French boats were there, the Newfoundlanders obtained remunerative employment. Further, the early baiting of the French boats enabled them to leave more speedily than usual, and the risk of conflict was thus materially diminished. The circumstance shows the unfortunate position in which our fellow-colonists in Newfoundland are placed by reason of the treaty rights of France in connection with their shores and fisheries. It suggests also the unwisdom of the admission of Newfoundland into the Canadian Confederation, even should the people of the Island at any time desire such an arrangement, of which, truth to tell, there seems to be no immediate danger—so long as this vexed question remains unsettled. Canadians, after their long struggles for responsible government and virtual self-rule, would hardly take kindly the employment of such arbitrary measures by the commander of a British war-ship, however necessary or salutary such use of his discretionary power might seem to be. They would prefer to fix the price of their own herrings.

A cable correspondent remarks in substance, with obvious truth, that on no previous occasion has the sailing of a Governor-General for Canada attracted nearly so much attention in Great Britain as has that of Lord Aberdeen. The correspondent adds, probably with equal truth, that the fact is due quite as much to the rising idea of Canada's importance in the British mind, as to the extreme popularity of the Governor-General himself. Both causes are very gratifying to the Canadian people. Referring for a moment to the latter, we may perhaps be permitted to say—and we do so without the slightest failure in the respect and honour due to his predecessors who have so ably and faithfully discharged the duties of a position which is not with-

out its difficulties and responsibilities—that we have especial reason to congratulate ourselves on the choice of Lord Aberdeen. While the various British Governments have, at least since Confederation, selected for the position noblemen of high rank, proved ability, and, in most cases, considerable experience in responsible positions, Lord Aberdeen will be, if we mistake not, the first Governor-General who has come to Canada with an extensive and intimate knowledge of the people, institutions and resources of the country, formed by personal travel and observation. In fact, it would hardly be too much to say that he and Lady Aberdeen are almost half Canadians already. This cannot fail to give them great advantages in the discharge of the functions of their high office. They will have at the outset that understanding of the genius of our people and institutions which those who have come before them have been obliged to gain while in office. It may further be observed that while there is no reason to fear that the new occupants of Rideau Hall will fail in the discharge of any of the social functions which naturally fall to those occupying their exalted positions, there is also good reason to hope, from their known activity in philanthropic work, that they will exert a powerful influence in this direction and thus endear themselves to that large and influential class of Canadians who care less for the niceties and refinements, and recreations of fashionable life, but who are deeply interested in whatever tends to promote the material and moral well-being of the masses. From all classes of Canadians, Lord and Lady Aberdeen are sure of a hearty welcome to Canada.

There can be no doubt that in point of numbers and enthusiasm the series of meetings held by Mr. Laurier in Ontario have so far been, to use the current phrase, a great success. What will be their real and lasting effect in determining the fate of parties at the next general election it is useless to attempt to predict. One had better wait, at any rate, until the completion of Sir John Thompson's tour before hazarding a conjecture. Mr. Laurier's reception has been most cordial. It could hardly have been otherwise, in view of the many attractive qualities of the man and the orator. Of dignified presence; genial, affable, even fascinating in manner; eloquent in speech; with an unspotted record, there is no reason why men and women of all parties should not unite, as they seem to a considerable extent to have done, in giving him such a welcome as manifests their determination to rise above all prejudices of race and sect and estimate the man at his intrinsic worth. In his public addresses Mr. Laurier has amply sustained his reputation as an eloquent and graceful orator, who well understands the art of putting his arguments in the best and simplest language, and in the clear-

est and most effective shape and order. Beyond this, perhaps, we can hardly go. Mr. Laurier does not claim for himself, and his discerning friends will scarcely claim for him, the credit of great profundity in thought. Nor yet does he manifest the highest originality in argument or very great power to give freshness and variety to his modes of presenting it. In making these modifications, however, it is but fair to remember that existing circumstances compel him to deal mainly with fiscal questions, a line of discussion which is not his forte. No doubt, too, he is well aware that Dr. Chalmers' famous motto, "Simplify and repeat," is as applicable to political as to theological oratory, if permanent rather than momentary effects are to be sought.

Many of our readers are no doubt waiting with curiosity, if not with stronger feelings, to hear the reply which Sir John Thompson and his colleagues may be able to make to the arguments of Mr. Laurier and his supporters. We venture to suggest a single example of the kind of difficulties he will have to meet, which occurs to us as we write, by way of illustration. We should like much to know what defence he can make of the tariff on refined sugar which compels Canadian consumers of that indispensable article to purchase it from Canadian refiners at a higher price than that which it could otherwise be procured. That the tax does not pay as a protection to Canadian labour has been again and again demonstrated. That it is not needed to enable the refiners to continue their industry Mr. Laurier seems to make equally clear by the simple statement of the fact, for such we must believe it to be, that the manager of a Montreal refinery is in receipt of the handsome salary of sixty thousand dollars a year! On general principles it is of course, no business of the public what salary a man receives in a private capacity, and it would be an impertinence to inquire the support of which every user of sugar is forced to contribute, the fact becomes one of public interest and concern. Mr. Laurier's argument that protection cannot be necessary to the maintenance of such an industry seems perfectly valid. Will the Premier endorse the remarkable argument which has recently been put forth by a Toronto paper, controlled by a member of Parliament, and contend that it is necessary to compel the people to pay tribute in no handsome a fashion to a Canadian manufacturer in order to make them patriotic? Will he endorse the astounding assertion that the Canadian people are so unpatriotic that they would not only buy the article they need from a foreigner in preference to a Canadian when the former are cheaper—a weakness which we strongly suspect the editor himself would hardly rise above—but would actually buy from the foreigner in