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IN accordance with what seems to have become the established practice, the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament on Friday last promised no legislation of primary importance and broached no policy sufficiently pronounced to challenge attack by the Opposition. As a consequence the formal address in reply was quickly agreed to. Parliament and the country are to be congratulated on the dignified and courteous tone of the respective speeches on the occasion. Of that of Mr. R. S. White, the mover, it is sufficient to say that it did not disappoint the somewhat high expectations which had been formed—expectations based partly upon the fact that the speaker is the son of his deceased father, and partly upon his thorough training in the school of journalism, the best of all political schools outside of Parliament itself. The speech of the seconder, Mr. Lepine, seems to have been somewhat narrowed by the limitations imposed, or supposed to be imposed, by his commission as the special representative of labour. The speeches of Hon. Mr. Laurier and the Premier were respectively characteristic, the former courteous, dignified, and neat to the verge of elegance; the latter, humorous, witty, and diplomatic. Both skirmished around the burning questions of our trade relations and our fishery disputes with our neighbours, but without coming to close quarters.

WITHOUT doubt, the two questions above referred to are by far the most important that can at present engage the attention of Canadian public men. It may indeed be said that the latter, that concerning the Fisheries dispute, is not really up for discussion. The United States having rejected the Treaty agreed to by their own President and Cabinet, while Canadians honestly believe that in consenting to the terms of that document they, on their part, went to the utmost bounds of concession, it may be urged with much force that the only attitude now consistent with British and Canadian self-respect is one of dignified waiting for our neighbour's initiative. Unfortunately this is more easily said than done. Action of some kind is forced upon our Government by circumstances.

The fishery season will come around again in the course of a few months. American fishermen will swarm along our coasts. Though the territorial rights involved in the preservation of the inshore fisheries must be defended unflinchingly and at all hazards, there is undoubted wisdom in Mr. Laurier's advice that the Government should not act too hastily in falling back upon the strict enforcement of the Treaty of 1818. Mr. Laurier seems to assume that the notice given by the Government to its officers to suspend the granting of licenses under the *Modus Vivendi* arrangement is equivalent to the termination of that arrangement. It may be hoped that this does not necessarily follow. A late number of the *Canadian Gazette*, which is supposed to have access to high sources of inspiration, says: "The Dominion authorities do not intend to object to the renewal of the expiring licenses of American fishermen enabling them to fish in Canadian waters." The suggestion offered by the Leader of the Opposition to the effect that the Government should wait until after the inauguration of President Harrison and be guided somewhat by the attitude of the new administration, seems so eminently reasonable under the circumstances that the Government can scarcely fail to follow it. Self-interest and neighbourly feeling alike advise that any indication on the part of the Republican Administration of a willingness either to renew treaty negotiations or to submit the questions at issue to arbitration, should be met by a cheerful extension or renewal of the *Modus Vivendi*.

NOTHING could be easier than for Mr. R. S. White to prove with almost mathematical precision that President Cleveland was guilty of the grossest inconsistency in his treatment of the Fisheries question. His approval of the Treaty and his famous Retaliation Message are utterly incapable of reconciliation on any other principle than that of political expediency—expediency of such a character that it hesitated not at a sudden and unprovoked change of front towards a neighbouring country in the hope of checkmating a hostile party and propitiating a turbulent faction at home. Nevertheless, the obvious fact is that we have no longer President Cleveland to deal with. Future negotiations must be conducted or future disputes fought out with the party which not only caused the rejection of the draft treaty by the Senate, but which has just now cast aside the proposed extradition treaty. The analysis of the reasons advanced by Senators for the latter course, as given by the Washington correspondent of the *Toronto Mail*, is instructive reading, especially the part of it which shows that the policy of the Republicans is to refuse to arrange special treaties with Great Britain for the settlement of special difficulties. What they seem now disposed to insist on is a comprehensive Treaty for the settlement of all alleged grievances. Prominent among these grievances on the part of the United States are not only the extradition and fisheries matters, but an alleged infraction of the Monroe Doctrine by Great Britain in Venezuela. With this agglomeration of matters in dispute, with the wound to national vanity inflicted by the designed delay of Lord Salisbury in appointing a successor to Lord Sackville, and with Mr. Blaine in the most prominent post in the forthcoming Administration, it must be confessed that the outlook is not too hopeful. It is certainly unfortunate that Canada's interests should be complicated with British questions of long standing, but this is, of course, a necessary adjunct of the colonial status.

THE appointment of Mr. W. J. Alexander to the newly created Chair of English in the University of Toronto will, there is good reason to hope, be satisfactory to all parties, except, possibly, the disappointed candidates and their personal friends. Those who were convinced that the interests of Canadian higher education, as well as justice to Canadian talents and scholarship, demanded that a Canadian should be chosen for the position, will be gratified to know that their views have prevailed. Those who are more or less doubtful whether the opportunities afforded by Canadian institutions and environments can be relied on to impart the high degree of culture and erudition which should be deemed essential in the occupant of so important a chair, will be equally gratified to learn that Dr. Alexander has had, in addition to such advantages as

his native land could afford, unsurpassed facilities for the most thorough training in some of the foremost institutions in England, Germany and the United States, namely, the London, Berlin and Johns Hopkins Universities. Dr. Alexander has, moreover, it appears, not only made the study of the English Language and Literature a specialty, but has had some years of successful experience in teaching his favourite subject in Dalhousie University. It may reasonably be hoped, therefore, that he will bring to the duties of his new position, not only ample scholarship and literary enthusiasm, but aptitude for instruction, and advanced ideas as to the regard which should be had to that practical development of the literary taste and faculty in his students, which is the end of all educational processes, and which can be imparted by no lecturing alone, however brilliant or profound, but only by persistent individual work on the part of the student, and by the constant use of inductive, that is, true educational methods in the lecture room. While only one could receive the appointment, it is pleasing to know that there were several other Canadian applicants whose high qualifications must have made the task of selection an exceedingly difficult and delicate one for the University authorities and the Minister of Education.

THE Canadian public will, we believe, have learned with regret that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has not yet given up the fight with Manitoba. Another attempt is to be made to debar the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway from operating in the Province. The shrewd and far-seeing men who control the policy of the first-named Company should understand their own interests, but to onlookers it is difficult to see what the Company can gain by persisting in a course which can be construed only as one of unfair and selfish hostility to the interests of the Province. Even should they succeed in gaining a verdict on the ground that the chartering of the competing road was *ultra vires* of the Local Legislature, the only result must be either the confirmation of the charter by the Dominion Parliament, or a modification of the Canadian constitution in so far as it injuriously restricts the powers of the Local Legislatures in such matters. It is utterly inconceivable that the Province which has already struggled with so much determination against railway monopoly, and which has enlisted the sympathies of the older Provinces on its behalf, can, under any circumstances, be ultimately balked of what its people regard as one of the rights of freemen, by any verdict of the Courts, based upon nice, if not dubious, legal discriminations. Dispassionate observers in the North-West foresaw years ago that the monopoly of the Canadian Pacific could not be maintained. They discerned even then the rising tide of public sentiment which has now caused the prohibition to be swept away. And now that the objectionable clauses have been expunged from the charter, by consent of the Company, and in return for a consideration given by the Government and Parliament of Canada, it seems impossible to suppose that the people of Manitoba can be deprived of the fruits of their hard-won victory by any appeal to the Courts on technical grounds. The competing road may be embarrassed, the people may be still further exasperated, but the substance of what has been gained will be held with a resolute hand. It would surely have been worthier of the powerful corporation which has already secured such enormous advantages to have determined to win by fair and vigorous competition rather than by a policy of obstruction.

IT cannot be supposed that the election of Mr. Colter by a small majority over Dr. Montague, in Haldimand, reveals much as to the state of public opinion in regard to any great political question now before the country. It does show, it is true, that in the presence of personal or local issues, or of old party predilections, the great majority of the electors are neither carried away by the cry for "Unrestricted Reciprocity," nor frightened by the bugbear of Annexation. To our thinking the most significant feature of the affair is the evidence indirectly afforded—if it be true that the matter is to be once more brought before the election court—of the partial breakdown of our electoral system and the need of further amendment. That the secret ballot, the closing of saloons, etc., have wrought a great and most salutary reform in