

investigation. Necessarily but one side is now being heard. All lovers of justice will suspend judgment until all the evidence has been presented and tested on both sides. Meantime it would be as useless as it is impossible for the friends of the Minister of Public Works to shut their eyes to the fact that he is being placed in a very equivocal position. If there is rebutting testimony it should be brought forward with as little delay as possible. Even should the charge of complicity be shown to be without foundation, it is clearly inevitable that Sir Hector Langevin's reputation as a departmental head will be terribly damaged. It seems almost impossible to doubt, in view of the evidence already elicited, that the Government, which means in this connection the people of Canada, were systematically and deliberately robbed, through a series of years, by a firm of contractors which was entrusted with very large contracts. The state of things under which such doings were possible could scarcely have continued so long under ordinarily vigilant management. Under the circumstances it still appears to us that it would have been both wiser and more becoming on the part of the Minister to have taken the advice so freely bestowed, or rather to have anticipated that advice, by stepping temporarily aside during the investigation. It is stated that Mr. Osler who has of late been added to the number of distinguished lawyers attending the meetings of the Committee, represents not the accused Minister but the Government. There can be no objection, we suppose, to the action of the Government in thus becoming, in a sense, a party in the investigation, seeing that whatever involves the administration of one of its departments, or the reputation of one of its members, involves the Government itself. It has been repeatedly stated that the Committee, though observing to a large extent legal forms in its mode of procedure, is not bound to admit legal technicalities or observe legal precedents, farther than may be, in the opinion of its members, helpful in eliciting the truth. This being the case, the question arises whether it would not be wise on the part both of the Government and the accused parties to refrain from interposing purely legal objections and technicalities to prevent the admission of proffered evidence. The best interests of the Government and of all innocent parties demand that the investigation be as searching and thorough as possible, without unnecessary let or hindrance of any kind. To those who have followed the course of the investigation this remark will not seem wholly uncalled for.

AS our readers are well aware, the reports of the Minister of Education of Ontario have for some years past shown that not even a free school system is sufficient of itself to save us from the disgrace and danger of having a large number of those who are to be the Canadian people of the next generation grow up in absolute ignorance. The facts thus presented have shown that it was imperative that some better machinery should be provided for enforcing the compulsory education of all children of school age in the country. The result has been the Act for the Prevention of Truancy that was passed by the Legislature at its late session, at the instance of the Minister of Education. A copy of this Act is now before us. It certainly seems to be well adapted to effect the purpose. It first enacts that all children between the ages of eight and fourteen shall be required to attend the public school in the school districts in which they respectively reside. Exceptions are of course made to meet the cases of those who are receiving efficient instruction at home, those who may be sick, those whose circumstances compel them to work for their own support, or for that of relatives dependent upon their exertions, etc. Machinery is provided for obtaining reliable records of the names, residences, parents, or guardians, etc., of all children within the prescribed age-limits. In every city, town and incorporated village, the Police Commissioners or Municipal Council are required to appoint a truant officer, or, if necessary, more

than one, whose special duty it shall be to see to the enforcement of the Act. On the notification or complaint of the Principal of the public school, or of one of the trustees, or of any responsible citizen, it becomes the duty of the truant officer to enquire carefully into the case, to notify the parents, guardians or other parties responsible for the child who is failing to attend the school, and to warn them that the continued violation of the law will expose them to prosecution and fine. The truant officer is to act under the direction of the School Boards. An excellent feature of the Act, and one which we have often recommended, is the provision that children who have been expelled from the public school may be sent to an Industrial school. The truant officer is empowered to enter factories, stores and all places where children may be employed for purposes of inspection, and fines may be imposed upon any persons in whose employ are found children under fourteen years of age. Such are some of the provisions of the new Act. All good citizens will give their sympathy and aid to those entrusted with its enforcement.

LORD SALISBURY has added to his already high reputation as Foreign Secretary by his patient and not ungenerous dealings with Portugal in regard to the African embroglio. There can be little doubt that he held in his hands the fate of the Portuguese monarchy. As the *Christian Union* observes, if he had insisted on a literal observance of the terms of the agreement signed by King Charles, notwithstanding its rejection by the Cortez, as of course he had power to do, he would undoubtedly have precipitated the revolution which was at one time imminent. While the modification to which he consented has gained him, in the eyes of others, however it may seem to the Portuguese themselves, credit for a certain degree of magnanimity, it is pretty clear that Great Britain has really lost little or nothing by it. Under the new arrangement the lowlands north of the Zambesi go to Portugal, the highlands south of that river and east of Mashonaland to Great Britain. But the lowlands are unsuited for European occupation and must be cultivated, if at all, by natives, while the highlands in question are believed to be both rich in minerals and healthful for Europeans. Having secured in addition the free navigation of all rivers flowing through Portuguese territory in Africa, and low rates of duties on goods crossing Portuguese territory; having also, by means of the British South African Company's virtual occupation of Manicaland, through its establishment of a military post and alliance with the native prince, secured a further important extension of the zone of "British influence," the British Premier's negotiations can hardly fail to be satisfactory even to the most grasping of his countrymen.

THE struggle for the election of Governor, which is to take place in a few months in the State of Ohio, will be watched with interest, not only by the people all over the Republic, but by many in other nations, because of the representative nature of the issues involved. The nomination of Mr. McKinley, of high tariff fame, by the Republican Convention which met a week or two since, commits that party to the continued endorsement of the McKinley tariff. Hence the contest in this State is to be fought on lines which are really national rather than local in character. In fact, of twelve resolutions adopted by the Convention, it is said that all except one deal with questions of general, as distinct from State, politics. Seeing that the success of Mr. McKinley would have a great effect in finally fixing the policy of the Republican party, and would be hailed as a victory for the new tariff, it is to be regretted that the incidents of the campaign are so decidedly in his favour that his election is tolerably sure. At least so the Republicans think, and his defeat would be to them a great surprise. The Democrats, it is true, have the advantage, by no means an inconsiderable one, of being in possession. The State has now a Demo-

cratic Governor and a Democratic Legislature. But, on the other hand, while the Republicans are united and enthusiastic, the Democrats are more or less divided. The former have the strongest candidate who could have been selected. The Democrats have no man who can command in the same way the confidence and enthusiasm of the party. Governor McCampbell, who will probably be re-nominated, has made enemies and is by no means so popular with his own party as is Mr. McKinley with his. Some of the leading Republican papers contend strongly that the Republican disasters of last fall were the result of a snap judgment, the outcome of misrepresentation and prejudice, which there will now have been time to counteract and dispel. Nor can it be denied by the most determined foe of the McKinley Bill, that, combined with the reciprocity annex put to it at the instance of Mr. Blaine, the policy embodied in that Bill is, in some respects, more logical and consistent, from the protectionist point of view, than the mixed policy that preceded it. Its seeming unfriendliness to other nations is not taken into the account, or, if it is, is in some quarters an additional influence in its favour.

THE Congressional Junta of Chili have issued a manifesto in which the condition of affairs in that unhappy Republic is described, as it appears from their point of view, and an appeal made to foreign powers for their recognition as belligerents. It is, of course, impossible to accept an *ex parte* statement of this kind as the end of controversy in such a matter. The only way by which the outside world can in this instance arrive at a conclusion even approximating the real state of the case, is by striking a balance between the statements of the opposing parties. We do not mean, of course, that the balance is to be struck with reference, so to speak, to mere quantity of affirmation in the matter of assertions and claims. Quality as well as quantity must be taken into the account. Internal evidence will count for a good deal in estimating the value of such affirmations. Testing the matter in this way, most persons who believe in the principles of self-government and free institutions will, we fancy, find their sympathies drawn, in a greater or less degree, to the side of the insurgents. In the first place, as the *New York Nation* points out, President Balmaceda is convicted out of his own mouth of playing the part of an unconstitutional and would-be despotic ruler. His own message to Congress, dated April 20, shows that when the Chilean Legislature, which is supposed to be a constitutional Parliament with a responsible Executive, grew distrustful of him, declined to accept the Cabinets he formed, and finally went so far as to refuse to vote the annual appropriations for the army and navy, he, instead of bowing to the will of the people constitutionally expressed, dispersed the Congress by an armed force, closed the higher courts, imprisoned the judges who decided against his views, and proceeded to rule the country as a self-appointed dictator, thus provoking the civil war which has for so long been devastating the country. On the other side the *New York Tribune* reminds us that the army remains faithful to Balmaceda, that through it he has control in the majority of the Provinces, and that his undeniably illegal proceedings have been condoned by the Congress recently elected. To all this the answer is easy. All the other facts stated in his favour are the outcome of the one fact that he has control of the army. Everyone knows what is to be expected from a Legislature elected from Provinces under martial law. In regard to the primary fact that the army remained faithful, the *Nation* well shows by historical examples that it is characteristic of standing armies to stand by those who have been their lawful rulers, even when the latter become transformed into self-constituted dictators. The fact is rather a strong argument against a standing army in a free country than an evidence of the righteousness of the cause they uphold. It is by no means likely that any foreign nation will grant belligerent rights to the insurgents until they