

much more to follow, should, after having been indirectly under challenge and criticism during the whole session, have been brought up for decision during the closing hours. It seems also, on the face of it, very strange that the Government should have asked its followers to reject an amendment which simply provided that in case the company building the road should fail to operate it after completion, and so be unable to earn the annual appropriation of \$80,000, which is promised as payment for transport of mail and other services stipulated for, those annual payments should not be made. On what grounds the Government saw fit to refuse a condition which appears to the unsophisticated simply fair and just, we have been unable to ascertain. It cannot be denied that there is some possibility of such a default, seeing what has already occurred in connection with the section of the road which was built on an alternative route. The *Mail and Empire* points out that if the \$40,000 is not earned every year the land of the company is to be mortgaged to the Government for the deficiency. We are not sure whether this explanation is intended to meet the contingency in question, or merely to show that security is provided for the full value of the subsidy, in case the amount of Government transportation needed should not be a complete equivalent. But it is highly doubtful whether the land, whose value will depend largely upon the operation of the road, would be worth the money advanced should the road not be kept in operation, and even if it were, the affair would become a strange kind of land transaction. We should really be glad to know, as we dare say would many others who wish to judge fairly between the parties, on what grounds the Government refused to insert a provision so seemingly just and reasonable.

The Drainage
Canal.

The facts and figures given by our Montreal correspondent in his letter in this number emphasize still further the necessity that our Government should lose no time in taking action, if it has not already done so, to avert if possible the danger which threatens us from the completion of the Chicago drainage canal. If the lowest calculation of the constructing engineer—an interested party—be accepted, no argument is needed to prove that the lowering of the lakes and river to the extent of even two-and-a-half or three inches may prove a very serious matter for all the dwellers on the shores, seeing that even now the shallowness of the harbours is causing serious inconvenience and loss. It is gratifying to learn that the cities and towns on the other side of these waters are moving to prevent the consummation of the scheme. But the least we, on this side, can do, or ought to do, is to come to their aid with all the information and influence we can command. Some assurance was, we think, given in Parliament that the Dominion Government is on the alert to protect the interests of Canada in the matter. But it would be reassuring were the Government to take the people into its confidence, and let them know what investigations have been made, what action taken, and with what results. Have the Government received satisfactory assurance that there is really no cause for alarm? Or are they still prosecuting their inquiries, or corresponding with Washington through the proper channel? There can surely be no occasion for anything but the most friendly communications in such a case. It is inconceivable that the American Government would hesitate to give every necessary assurance that no city in the wide Republic will be permitted, in the promotion of its own local interests, to inflict injury either upon their own countrymen in other cities, or upon a friend and neighbour in the adjacent territory. But the people whose interests may be at stake would like to know. Why may they not know?

The Holmes
Case.

To what pitch of fiendish callousness and atrocity is human nature in its worst development capable of attaining in this humanitarian age? When one reads how one demon in human form butchers an innocent young girl in cold blood to gratify a lustful impulse, and another deliberately plots and plans for months or years the death of his own brother's son as a means of cheating an Insurance Company out of a few thousands of dollars, one is constrained to feel that the very acme of human depravity must have been reached. But now we are, apparently, about to be confronted with authenticated details of a series of murders so numerous, so cold-blooded, so remorseless, that they seem to demonstrate that there may still be beyond the lowest depth of moral criminality of which we have hitherto had evidence, a lower deep which we might have supposed beyond the power of human heart to contemplate, or human nerve to sound. Whatever shrinking one may have at any time had from the methods of those who make it their business to act as sleuth hounds of justice to track and hunt down those who war against society, it is hard in the presence of such facts as are being daily brought to light in connection with the Holmes case, to do otherwise than bless those who perform this service for humanity. We may almost add that, however one may have hitherto recoiled from the thought of the forcible taking off by a most revolting mode of those who have proved themselves unfit to live, it is difficult, in the presence of such revelations as have been brought to light in this almost unique case, to refrain from welcoming any method that can speedily remove such a monster from the earth, and thus free society from the appalling danger which menaces it so long as he is alive upon its surface. Other cases of deep-hued crime, with which we have of late been made all too familiar, may generally be regarded as the offspring of a single abnormally developed criminal propensity. The case of the wretch now before a horror-struck continent seems to show such a combination of the worst propensities as will long give it an easy pre-eminence in the annals of crime, and furnish a study for anthropologists and sociologists for half a century to come.

A Great Political
Change

From Home Rule, Disestablishment and Local Option to Mr. Balfour's measures, which, "so far as parties are concerned, may almost be described as non-controversial, but which are nearer the welfare and the happiness of the people than the most controversial measures which have ever been devised," is a long rise or a long fall, according to the view which may be taken of it. Certainly the matter at issue in the Mother Country at this election, almost more than at any other of this generation, has been very far from being one merely of "Outs" and "Ins." Apart altogether from the general question of which is best in the long run for the country, it is evident that the two policies represent two widely divergent lines of political faith. The outgoing Government stood for legislation by the people and into the hands of the people. The incoming Government bids fair to be a Government which will legislate for the people. The guiding star of the one was democracy; that of the other paternalism. The avowed mission of the one is to turn and overturn until the power comes to those whose right it is—according to Radical principles, of course—to rule, that is, the people, which, again, means, of course, the majority, the masses. That of the other has not yet been very distinctly formulated. Whether the re-action shall prove to be merely an impulse, or a conviction having more or less permanence, the people seem to have come to distrust, for the present, their own capacity for self-rule, and to have taken a long stride in the direction of the old principles and methods. Still this way of reasoning and generalizing has, probably, but a modicum