

the Department of Education from the list of departments presided over by a responsible Minister; but the day came when the Provincial Legislature insisted on the extinction of this anomaly. The attempts that have been made to substitute a Railway Commission for the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, were, as far as they went, efforts to revert to the state of things which preceded the establishment of responsible government, made without malice prepense, or conscious intent. From the practice of the United States, we can gather no examples applicable to ourselves; their method of enforcing responsibility is different from ours; the President may be said, comparing their system to ours, to be his own Prime Minister; his position being similar to that which Lord Sydenham and Sir Charles Metcalfe aimed to reach and maintain for themselves; the attempt, under the latter Governor-General, producing widespread discontent. It may be as well to enquire whether there was not a distinct connection between the appointment of one Superintendent of Education and a pamphleteering defence of Lord Metcalfe in that Governor-General's quarrel with his Ministers. And besides, Lord Metcalfe was the deadly enemy of responsible government. Dr. Ryerson was the non-Parliamentary head of the Education Department, and when he left the office, a Parliamentary head was appointed. If the Police Commission has, on the whole, done its work well, the fact that it is largely irresponsible is not its merit; it would be much better, if as good results could be obtained, that it was directly responsible, and made to feel its responsibility, at regular intervals. A commission that owes its perpetuation to some *ex officio* virtue has the one merit of being automatic in its succession. Some offices qualify men to perform other similar duties, but where there is no analogy there is no security for aptitude. This mode of securing succession in the commission is open to the objection that it makes the office of commissioner a life office, and in this way reduces responsibility to the smallest point.

We hope, since the question has been started, that the merits and demerits of administration by commission will meet full discussion. Fancies, prejudices, and nebulous opinions, based on nothing, may well be neglected, since they throw no light on the subject, and in no way aid in reaching a sound conclusion. If the suggestions we have made serve to point to some of the questions involved, our purpose will have been served.

### THE BONUSING SYSTEM.

As we have often enough contended, the system of municipalities giving bonuses to industries is artificial; generally unfair, and apt to result in disappointment. Some people will not be convinced of this, however, and grow angry when anyone denounces what they consider a nursery blessing. That bonusing industries is not always productive of great good, however much it may demonstrate the liberality of the rate-payers of the municipality, would appear from the following in the Kincardine Reporter: "The Kincardine stove foundry proprietors received a \$7,000 bonus from the town, for which little value was given. They now want \$10,000 damages over a question of seizure for

taxes. The dispute arose over the collection of school taxes on the foundry, from which the Grundy Bros. claim exemption by by-law. This is the first year that collection has been made, and it is the last year of the term of their exemption. Service was accepted on behalf of the corporation." In this season of prosperity many a city, town and village will be anxious to buy a new industry of some kind. Some of them may profit by reading of Kincardine's troubles, and take the precaution to see that the terms on which they get the concern are thoroughly set forth in the agreement.

### THE MONTREAL CUSTOMS' CASE.

Since the publication of our article of May, on this subject, we have learned some circumstances which increase the regret that a stern example was not made of the offending firm of Fitzgibbon, Schafheitlin & Co., instead of the Government of Canada compromising with them. Evidence was offered sufficient to wring far more severe penalties out of the defendants than a mere fine of \$20,000, which was a very small sum in comparison with the scale of their impositions. Considering the weight of the representations made by the Boards of Trade of Montreal and Toronto, and the labors of the wholesale dry goods deputation which went from Montreal to Ottawa, the Government ought, in the interests of honest trading and in justice to the hundreds of honest importers who pay them millions in duties every year, to have taken a firm stand against such violations of the customs' laws as these people had committed. It is very significant that the firm of Fitzgibbon, Schafheitlin & Co. have abandoned their suit for damages, entered in 1897, against the "Shareholder," of Montreal, which boldly accused them of defrauding the Government. Some days ago they filed a *desistement*, what we would call an abandonment of their action, with costs to the defendants. No settlement was made out of court. It was simply a question of throw up the sponge and pay costs, or go on with the libel suit, defendant having his proofs ready. The former alternative was adopted, and the evidence of justification was not entered upon. The proprietors of the Shareholder are to be congratulated on the stand they made for honest business, and we learn with satisfaction that they are to get their costs.

### A COMMERCIAL AGENT IN LONDON.

A correspondent makes, in to-day's issue, a plea for the establishment in London of a place where Canadian produce and manufactures may be introduced to enquirers or possible purchasers. And he urges that a person who knows Canada and Canadian merchandise should be put in charge of it. We have long been of the opinion that this country was handicapped in not possessing a central place or properly qualified people to exhibit our wares to the British public, who are now more than ever curious about us. To be sure there is the Imperial Institute; but that is not the place for practical people and the show made there is of the baldest. And there is the High Commissioner's office, but Lord Strathcona, able and admirable as he is, is not a goods' salesman or showman. Mr. Colmer does serviceable work, but he is not a commercial man. And as to the other persons in the office, the less said the better. A