

for argument how long it is ever possible to sustain public engagements in opposition to the opinions of the majority of voters in a district; and certainly British politicians have of late inclined to the view that the wishes of any considerable body of electors cannot be thwarted for long. Perhaps they hold that in old-established countries the sacredness of public faith is a matter of diminished importance. But if contracts are to be observed at all, if good faith and a reputation for stability is of any value to the well-being of a Government, the Canadian Pacific Company can at least establish an undeniable claim to have their monopoly continued till the year 1891, before which time they were not bound to complete the construction of the route. If, at the commencement of the troubles in Manitoba, the ministers of the Dominion had afforded support to some proposal embracing such a reduction of the period of the monopoly, and at the same time had induced the directors of the railway to arrange an abatement of the charges imposed for freights, compensating them if necessary against loss, it may well be believed that the edict of disallowance need never have been promulgated. Even now, I should hope that a compromise might be arranged.* The railway syndicate must comprehend that the Red River scheme is only in abeyance, and that if the irritation of the province is sustained, all methods will be resorted to by their opponents to thwart the success of their undertaking. On the other hand, the Manitobans must be aware that the maintenance of the proposed line, so long as the veto is enforced, will form a ruinous addition to their responsibilities and taxes. They must agree to submit to inconvenience rather than injure the reputation of the Dominion.

Mr. Lawrence Oliphant's suggestion, that an imperial civil secretary attached to the Governor-General's staff should be appointed by the Home Government, with authority to arbitrate upon disputes arising between the provincial and Dominion legislatures, might have conducted towards an early settlement of the quarrel. It is monstrous that the present state of things should be allowed to continue. In spite of the disallowing veto, and in spite of an injunction which was obtained by the Canadian Pacific Railway to stay the construction of the Valley line over certain lands which they possessed, the law has been defied, and the building of the railway continued. Mr. Norquay, the late Manitoban premier, if he has been rightly reported, declared, at a public meeting, that the scheme could only be stopped by bloodshed.

It is understood that language must not be weighed too nicely

* Since correcting the proof-sheets of this article, a compromise, which promises to be successful, has been proposed and, I believe, accepted. I have not thought it necessary to make any alteration, as it does not materially affect the argument.