

parishes over the superior fitness of this, that, or the other neighbor to be elected one of the Councillors, to whose hands the management of all local affairs is to be henceforth entrusted. The details of the Bill it is not now worth while to discuss, seeing that they are undergoing modification in its passage through the House. As it originally stood provision was made for the creation also of District Councils, formed by grouping parishes containing less than three hundred inhabitants. Some object to this feature of the Bill, holding that Home Rule should be granted to even the smallest parishes. Whatever form this section of the Bill may finally take it represents a large number of parishes to be added to the above calculation, as about to assume in some form the duties and responsibilities of local self-government. The Councils are to take over practically all the secular functions of the vestry, the churchwardens, and the overseers, and are to hold all property except that which is ecclesiastical. It would not be easy to over-estimate the life-giving and educative effect which the new arrangement must have upon the communities.

Two facts in connection with the recent elections in the United States stand out to view. One is the encouraging one that in a number of instances the forces that make for righteousness arrayed against the powers of evil, have come off victorious. The anti-gambling agitation in New Jersey has been successful, and in all probability the shameful legislation of last year will be speedily wiped from the statute book. In the city of Brooklyn the party fighting for municipal reform and purification has triumphed with an enormous majority. Evidently the better classes of citizens are taking a hand in state and municipal struggles to a greater extent than ever before. To quote one of their own significant sayings, "the Quaker vote is coming out" and making itself felt. The other fact is the evidence of more or less of reaction against the tariff-reform movement, which has been sweeping over the country with so resistless a force. It is difficult to say to what extent the results of the election are due to such reaction and to what extent to the operation of mere personal and local influences. Ohio is perhaps the one State in which tariff-reform was the main issue, and Ohio gave a sweeping majority for McKinleyism. The defeat of the reformers in this State was not unexpected. The greatness of the majority undoubtedly was. But whatever the true significance of these elections may be, the tariff-reformers do not seem to have been materially affected. The work to which the Democrats are pledged, will, it is believed, be performed without hesitation or weak compromise. But events will declare the true state of feeling before many days.

The Committee of Ways and Means is said to be well advanced in its work of preparing a scheme or bill for reduction of the tariff. This Bill, the reporting of which will be, under the American system, practically equivalent to its passage, will, it is believed, be a thorough carrying out of the electioneering pledges of the Party. The country is evidently now suffering from uncertainty; the sooner the question is decided the better for all.

There is probably no question concerning the proper relations between the State and the individual in regard to which public opinion, especially political opinion, has undergone a more marked change in late years, than in regard to that of the wages of workingmen. Time was not long ago when all such questions were relegated to the domain of sociology or philanthropy. The science of government was supposed to have nothing to do with them. It must not trench upon the relations between employer and employee. The sacred realm of competition must not be invaded. The adjustment of all questions of wages must be left to the operation of the law of supply and demand. There must be no interference by legislation, even to save the labourer from slow starvation. But a most significant change is taking place in public opinion, and so in political opinion, in regard to the matter. The old dogma of *laissez faire*, which was thought to be too strongly entrenched in logic and common sense ever to be moved, is giving way. Many cities and other corporations do not now hesitate to insert clauses in all contracts prescribing the minimum rate of wages which must be paid by successful competitors. Governments are beginning to follow suit. Mr. Asquith, the British Home Secretary, said in a recent speech that the question of the payment of labour was one which bulked as largely, and ought to take as high a place as any problem of contemporary politics. Amid enthusiastic cheering he declared that it is the business of Englishmen to make England worth living in, as well as worth dying for. It was both a higher and a harder task to make than to take a city. This is novel doctrine for free-trade England, though it ought not to stagger politicians in countries in which the governments make it a part of their business to increase the prices of the products of labour by protective taxes. Interference between employers and employed is a delicate business, but it is evident that a state of feeling is arising on both sides of the Atlantic which demands that an end be made in some way of "sweating" and grinding the life out of human beings and fellow-citizens. To what extent the law of competition can be safely interfered with by legislation is yet to be seen, but all governments and municipal corporations have the same undoubted

right as individuals to stipulate for a minimum wage. When they uniformly do so the influence will be powerful.

Two remarks will, we think, suffice in answer to the criticisms of our correspondent "N. C. D." In the first place, we still maintain that the parallelism does not exist. The compromise in the case of Quebec and Ontario was made by the representatives of the two provinces, constitutionally elected and having full authority and right to speak for their respective constituents, who in their turn had an undoubted right to speak as the people of the respective provinces. If there was any promise or understanding in the case of the Red River country and the Dominion, that promise, so far as the former was concerned, was not made by constitutionally appointed representatives, and the people in whose name the so-called delegates professed to speak had no political or moral right to bind the future residents of the great country on whose outmost fringe they were located. Certainly they had no right or authority to bind those who are now the great majority of the citizens of Manitoba and the North-west. This, at least, is the point we tried to make. In the second place, while it is true that "certain things are in the air in certain places," and that these things are put into it by those who live in it and breathe it, it is equally true that no system of sectarian schools could keep those things out of the air. Where the teachers and a majority of the children in the public school are Protestant, there will be a flavour of Protestantism in the air, and where, as is no doubt the case in certain sections of Manitoba, the teachers and a majority of the children are Catholic, there will then be a flavour of Catholicism in the air of the schoolroom. Can any fair-minded Catholic or Protestant object? They might as well object to the law of universal attraction. The only possible ground, so far as we can see, on which one can regard such a state of things as unfair to Catholicism is the ground that it is essential to Catholicism to keep it out of the free air of heaven and suffer it to breathe only an atmosphere artificially impregnated with Catholic teachings and influences. This is so uncomplimentary to Catholicism that we have shunned such an assumption. If free public schools, in which no dogmatic religious teaching is permitted are less favorable to Catholicism than to Protestantism it can be only because Catholicism demands special advantages at public expense for the inculcation of its principles, and shuns even-handed competition with Protestantism. Does "N. C. D." choose that horn of the dilemma? Will enlightened Catholics thank him for so doing? So far as we know, the heroic ideals of the public schools are as much neither Protestant nor Catholic, but as the