

applicants for Government patronage," and more to the same effect. Touchingly as so humble a confession of failure appeals to our sympathies we still must hope that the gentleman has been badly misreported. If otherwise, it is hard to conceive of anything better adapted to bring our vaunted system of government by party into disrepute, or still further to degrade its tone. Theoretically there is to every lover of democracy something grand in the idea of the workmen of any community uniting to send their representatives to the National Council. Rightly used the representative system and the ballot should be mighty educative forces working constantly to uplift the constituencies to a higher political level, and to imbue them with a loftier and more intelligent patriotism. But when the chosen representative distinctly recognizes that he feels bound by his relations to his constituents to use his vote and influence to secure, not better laws and a purer administration of them, but the largest possible share of the spoils for his own individual supporters, it is impossible not to feel that we have fallen upon evil times. The very man, who, honoured by the people's confidence, should devote every energy to the service of his country, in the highest and best sense of the word service, thus making himself an educator of his countrymen in the higher duties of citizenship, becomes their instructor in the most selfish and degrading arts of the patronage-hunting partisan. If the whole people were thoroughly imbued with the views and spirit which are so conspicuous in Mr. Perley's speech, the future of the Confederation would be dark indeed.

THE Senate gave the Commons and the country a genuine surprise in its rejection of the Short Time Railway Bill. It cannot be doubted that to the great majority the action was as pleasing as it was surprising. From the business point of view, as was tacitly confessed even by the advocates of the measure, the line had little or nothing to recommend it. Its real, and we might almost add admitted, purpose was to divert traffic from one route to another, not to increase its volume, or even to save any appreciable time in its despatch. When even the Leader of the Government can find nothing better to say in support of an expenditure of millions than that Parliament, by reason of some previous action, is pledged to the measure, it is pretty clear that the thing cannot be defended on its merits. Nor was it, so far as we were able to discover, very distinctly shown in what way the good faith of Parliament was involved. Into the unsavoury discussion as to whether the Senate really rejected the measure in spite of Sir John A. Macdonald's strenuous exertions, or otherwise, we have no desire to enter, as we have no information to give. The very discussion of such a question is, in its implications, most uncomplimentary to both Senate and Premier. What is more worthy of note than even the great saving of public money in the particular case, is the demonstration given of larger possibilities of usefulness on the part of the Upper House than any with which it has been popularly credited. Even should it prove, as some predict, that the saving effected in this case is but one of time, not of money, since, if the Government is really in earnest, it will reintroduce and eventually carry the rejected Bill, the incident, and the widespread approbation the Senate's action has called forth can scarcely fail to operate as a powerful object lesson to that body, making clear to it the direction in which both its interests and its duty undoubtedly lie.

IT is often said that the English never take a back step in political or social matters. Reforms are generally won only after a long and hard struggle with opposing forces, but once an advance has been made the vantage ground is held, fortified and made the base of operations for new forward movements. The same thing cannot, we fear, be said of Canada. The order now issued by the Postmaster-General, in accordance with the power taken by Government during the recent session, increasing the rate on registered letters from two cents to five, is distinctly and emphatically a retrograde movement. Whatever tends to facilitate the safe transmission of money in small sums is a direct stimulus to trade and enterprise. Whatever makes such transmission more costly or unsafe has of course precisely the opposite effect. Experience will probably prove that from the financial point of view the change is a mistake. It would not be surprising if it should be found to diminish instead of increasing the postal revenue from this source. Many letters that would have been sent registered at the old rate will not now be

sent at all. Many others which would have been adorned with a two cent registration stamp will now be sent unregistered. Not only will a considerable amount of legitimate post office business be transferred to other channels, but the temptations to dishonesty on the part of officials will be greatly increased. A British Postmaster General, finding too wide a chasm between receipts and expenditures in his department, would have set about retrenching in sinecures and other unnecessary expenditures on the one hand, and stimulating the business of letter writing, on the other. Mr. Haggart has, unfortunately, hit on the clumsier expedient of raising prices. We do not believe his success will be such as to tempt him to repeat the experiment.

MUCH difference of opinion is naturally evoked by the rumour, now generally accepted as correct, that the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott is to be made Minister of Railways. In point of ability and knowledge of the situation there is probably no other man available, in the ranks of the Government supporters, who can be regarded as equal, or even second to Mr. Abbott. As a leader of the Upper House he has shown himself possessed of many of the qualities of an accomplished Minister, and his record is, we believe, practically unassailable. But there are two very grave objections to the appointment which must make even Sir John pause before committing himself to it. The stain of the original Pacific Railway Scandal is still upon the hands of Mr. Abbott, who was the chief agent in the whole disgraceful transaction with the late Sir Hugh Allan. Again, Mr. Abbott's relations with the present C. P. R. Company have been so intimate as to unfit him, in the opinion of many, to be an impartial arbiter of the destinies of competitive lines. Sir John must be naturally reluctant to give provocation for the raking up of old scores now half-forgotten. But lack of courage was never one of his foibles, and it is very likely that the need he feels of so able a coadjutor will outweigh all other considerations and decide the question in favour of Mr. Abbott.

THE reason alleged for the hesitancy on the part of British capitalists to invest their money in the new line of fast steamships, for which the British and Canadian Governments are offering so liberal subsidies, is very suggestive, if it be the real one. It is said that, observing the rapidity with which changes and improvements are made in ocean vessels, they fear lest some new discovery or invention may, in a few years, so revolutionize the business as to render their ships, built at vast expense, practically valueless. There is unquestionably room for the fear. There is no more reason for supposing that the seventeen or twenty knot ocean greyhound of to-day marks the limit of possible achievement in ocean travel, than there would have been for resting in the same conclusion with regard to the vessels of twenty or fifty years ago. But it will be a curious development should it prove that invention has at length reached such a rate of progress that it tends to discourage and paralyze, rather than, as heretofore, stimulate enterprise. Such caution on the part of shrewd investors is, also, not without its warning for Governments, such as those of England and the United States, which are about to embark in navy building on an enormous scale.

THE meeting of the Committee of the United States Senate on Interstate Commerce which is now being held in New York is one of great importance to Canada as well as to the United States. Taken in connection with the recent decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission that the provisions of the interstate law are binding in respect to traffic originating in the United States, even though a point in Canada may be its destination, this meeting may be regarded as marking a stage in the attempt of interested American railroads either to compel Canadian competing lines running through United States Territory to enter into their combinations, or to exclude them altogether from operating on that side of the border. The latter attempt, if such is being made, will most assuredly fail. The commercial interests of Detroit, Chicago, and the whole chain of western cities on the one hand, and those of Portland, Boston, and New York on the other, are enlisted on the side of the Grand Trunk and other Canadian roads, these being regarded as the best allies of those cities and the commerce of which they are the centres, against the monopolistic tendencies of the American trunk lines. Several of the most powerful American newspapers, east and west, are taking strongly the side of the Canadian roads, as representing competi-

tion and reasonable freight rates, against monopoly and extortion. The investigation of the Senate Committee will probably be exhaustive and decisive, and as representatives of the Canadian lines, in the persons of such men as Messrs Van Horne and Hickson, are to be examined and heard, the Canadian side is sure to be well presented. We observe that one of the questions which the Senate Committee is charged to report upon is "whether there is any discrimination in the charges made for tolls, or otherwise, against American vessels which pass through the Welland and St. Lawrence canals." It is to be hoped that the interests of Canadian railroads and commerce may not be jeopardized by the persistence of our Government in what we cannot help regarding as an infringement of the spirit of the Treaty of Washington, in the interests of the lower St. Lawrence route.

MR. PARNELL'S friends of the better kind must have been rather taken aback by his frank and apparently shameless admission of falsehood in his cross-examination the other day. Since the collapse of the forged-letter fraud everything has been going in his favour. The excellent testimonials of character given him by men of the highest standing in Society and the State, and the failure of every attempt to connect him with conspiracy and crime, had combined to raise him to a height in public estimation, much above any at which he had previously stood. Unhappily for himself and for his friends he has now been rather suddenly pulled down by Attorney-General Webster from that lofty moral pedestal. Putting the most favourable construction possible on his admission that his statement in the House of Commons during the debate on Mr. Forster's Bill in 1881 to the effect that secret societies had ceased to exist in Ireland, was either absolutely untruthful or grossly exaggerated, and that he knew it to be such when making it, the effect must be exceedingly damaging both to his reputation and to his influence. The British public may condone many and serious faults of temper and conduct when committed under excitement by one who is intensely in earnest in the pursuit of some object which to him seems patriotic and right. But conscious, wilful falsehood in a deliberate statement on the floor of Parliament, where the highest ideas of honour are supposed to prevail, is a violation of one of the fundamental canons of political morality that will not readily be forgiven or forgotten by the nation, even should it be by partial politicians.

OTHER offences against the Parliamentary, or even against the moral code, are often committed in the heat of debate. In such cases a few words of sincere apology and regret will generally make the matter right and cause it to be dismissed from memory. Such incidents reveal weakness of character at certain points and do not necessarily affect public confidence in the high principle and general reliability of the man. But untruthfulness affects the character on all sides. It saps the foundations of confidence at every point. How is it possible for anyone in the future to know what reliance may be placed upon the most solemn assertions of the man who has once been forced to confess himself guilty of downright, intentional falsehood, or its equivalent? We are curious to know what effect this revelation will have upon the minds of those men of high principle who have but just now been enthusiastically, not to say effusively, protesting their faith in the integrity of the man, as well as in the nobility of his mission. What will Mr. Gladstone, himself, have to say, or what effect will the revelation have upon his future relations to one who can make such an admission without a blush to indicate that he is ashamed of such tactics or that he will hesitate to resort to them again on occasion.

A NEW YORK paper, referring to Mr. Gladstone's magnificent tribute to Mr. Bright, asks the significant question, Who will there be to pay a similar tribute to Mr. Gladstone when he shall have closed his unique career? The *British Weekly* is forced to pause before attempting to answer the question. It thinks of Mr. John Morley as the only man who seems capable of rising to such an occasion, but is constrained to admit that "all the fervour, solemnity, and elevation of which Mr. Morley is undoubtedly possessed do not make up for the transfiguring religious faith, 'the solemn scorn of ills,' which belongs to Gladstone and belonged to Bright." It then turns very naturally to Sir Charles Russell, whose recent oration before the Commission of Judges is admitted on all hands