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The long Manitoba Railway Monopoly controversy is drawing to a close. Premier Greenway has returned home carrying with him a written promise of Sir John A. Macdonald to the effect that the vetoing of the railway legislation of the Province shall at once cease. The change of policy will, it is understood, affect not only the old Province of Manitoba but the whole North-West. The consequence is that railways from various western points to the international line are already projected, and it can scarcely be doubted that within a very few years the North-West Territories throughout their whole extent, and British Columbia as well, will have numerous points of connection with the railway systems of the United States. Whether the effects will be so disastrous to the trade with Old Canada as has been predicted will remain to be seen. It may be hoped that in this, as in most other cases, the broader policy will prove the sounder and more patriotic one, and that the rapid growth and development of the country under the new stimulus will far more than counterbalance the effects of any temporary diversion of traffic. The terms made with the Canadian Pacific for the surrender of its monopoly have not yet been made public, nor is it quite clear by what process of reasoning the Government can induce its supporters, who have been trained to believe in the monopoly as the only safeguard of Canadian interests, to change their opinions with sufficient celerity, to enable them to support the new arrangement.

THE uncertainties of the law, and more particularly the ambiguities of the Dominion Franchise Act, have been strikingly illustrated in the reversal by the Supreme Court of Canada of the decision of Judge Rose in the case of Mr. Purcell and the Glengarry election. Of course, from the strictly legal point of view, Mr. Purcell, notwithstanding the unsavoury and scandalous facts brought to light at the trial in the Election Court, had the same right to take advantage of the technical plea as Sir Adolphe Caron and others who escaped trial by that means. Meanwhile Parliament and the people must submit with the best grace they can, to the spectacle of one found guilty by the court of wholesale bribery, sitting and voting as a duly elected representative of the people. The sight will, unhappily, not be novel in its worst features. The public will watch with interest for the promised amendments to the ambiguous and complicated Franchise

Act. The only satisfactory amendment would be its repeal, and the substitution of some simple, inexpensive, and workable system of franchise in its place. Is that past hoping for?

THE WEEK had occasion to point out a month or two since that the action of the Canadian Government in reference to the canal tolls gave too much colour to the charge made by certain unfriendly legislators in the United States, that the spirit of the Washington Treaty had not been observed. Another case of a still more dubious character gave rise to a warm discussion in the House of Commons a few days since. A well-known clause in the Canadian Customs Act, after enumerating certain natural products, provides that "any or all" of the articles so enumerated "may be imported into Canada free of duty, or at less rate of duty than is provided by this [the Customs] Act, upon proclamation of the Governor in Council, which may be issued whenever it appears to his satisfaction that similar articles from Canada may be imported into the United States free of duty, or at a rate of duty not exceeding that payable on the same under such proclamation when imported into Canada." Several of the articles in question have recently been put on the free list by the United States, and it was maintained by Hon. Mr. Mitchell and others on the floor of the House that the Government was in honour bound by its own statute; to reciprocate, so far as those articles are concerned. The Premier and the Minister of Justice warmly repudiated the imputation that a breach of faith had been committed, resting their justification on the ground that the clause is simply enabling not binding. In support of this interpretation they referred to the use of the word "may." The question of interpretation is, of course, a legal one, but it can hardly be denied that the ordinary reader would almost certainly infer that the proposed reciprocation was intended to follow as a matter of course, not of choice. The fact that the clause has often been referred to as a "standing offer," of reciprocity in natural products by members of the Government themselves, or without any disclaimer on their part, gives much colour to that view, as does, also, the further fact that the clause is described in the running marginal index in the Consolidated Statutes as meaning "certain articles to be free of duty in Canada when free in the United States." The Canadian Government cannot afford to let even the shadow of such an imputation rest upon its good faith towards a foreign nation, and should cause either the proclamation to be issued, or the ambiguity removed from the statute at the earliest possible moment.

THE Bill which has been introduced by the Government for the political organization of the North-West Territories is, in some of its provisions remarkable, if not unique. Those territories will, if the Bill passes in its present shape, present the anomaly of a Canadian community having a representative assembly without a responsible executive. Indeed it is hard to discover from the meagre outline given in the papers, that the territories will have any executive at all, or that it will be the business of any person or body in particular to see that its acts and decrees are enforced. Sir John A. Macdonald stated that the relations between the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West and the Governor-General in Council would be the same as between the Lieutenant-Governors of the Provinces and the Governor-General. But an important part of the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of a Province is to form a connecting link and medium of communication between the Government of the Dominion and his own responsible advisers. In the case of the Territories he will have no such advisers. He will have no veto, Sir John explains, over the Assembly's legislation. Will he have the power to initiate legislation? If so, how will he introduce and explain it, and who will see to its promotion in the Assembly? The legal members appointed by the Ottawa Government? Their presence in the Assembly is explained as but a temporary makeshift. If the Ottawa Government is to be the direct and only executive authority, what guarantee can the Assembly have that its legislation will have any binding force, or practical effect? These and other difficulties which suggest themselves may be removed when the Act is more fully explained, but at first view, and in the dubious light of Sir John A. Macdonald's introductory explanations, it would seem as if a North-West Assembly without responsible officers to guide its legislation or do its bidding must be a nondescript affair, and its deliberations a near approach to the farcical.