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THE latest news from Ottawa at the time of this writing is a veritable surprise. It is the announcement that Sir Hector Langevin tendered his resignation as a Minister of the Crown, preliminary to his appearance to give testimony before the Committee on Privileges and Elections. Had that testimony been, in any sense, an admission of wrongdoing in the matters alleged by the witnesses Murphy and Robert McGreevy, the cause of the resignation would have been apparent. But when the same message which brings the news of the Minister's resignation informs us that his sworn statement, read before the Committee, was a distinct and categorical denial of each and every one of the allegations in which he was represented as being privy to the infamous transactions in evidence before the Committee, his retirement from the Government seems to have taken place just at the moment when we should have expected him to stand firm and defiant. As we have before had occasion to point out, it would have been but becoming had Sir Hector seen fit to retire, temporarily at least, at the commencement of the investigation, seeing that the documentary evidence on which the committee was obliged to rely largely had to be procured from his own department. It would have indicated but a nice sense of propriety had he, in view of that fact, voluntarily put it out of his own power to manipulate this documentary evidence in any way. His present action can, we suppose, be accounted for only on the assumption that, while declaring in the most positive terms that his own hands are clean, he finds himself forced to admit that the fact that such frauds could have taken place under his administration, and have been continued so long, will be regarded by the public as *prima facie* evidence of glaring incompetency on his part. The Ottawa despatch before us assumes that Sir Hector's resignation was forced by the remarkably plain language used by Premier Abbott in the Senate the other day. But we are unable to see how the Premier's declared resolve to find out and punish the guilty without respect to persons, could compel the resignation of a man conscious of innocence. With most natures it would have had the very opposite effect.

WHAT will be the effect of Sir Hector's own statement upon the public mind? Until we have seen the full statement and learned the result of the cross-examination it is perhaps useless to conjecture. A most marked feature of the whole investigation, and one that renders it the more deeply humiliating and disgraceful to the country, is the fact that falsehood and perjury have clearly been rampant throughout. Of scarcely one of the chief witnesses, before Sir Hector, can one feel that his testimony, uncorroborated, is entitled to credence. Mr. O. E. Murphy's credibility was utterly shattered in cross-examination, as well as by his previous record. The Connollys as witnesses were remarkable chiefly for astounding forgetfulness and for skilful fencing with the examiners. Mr. Robert McGreevy, to say nothing of other incidents, stands convicted out of his own mouth of having sworn to what was, to all intents and purposes, a wilful untruth, in the matter affecting his brother's election. Mr. Thomas McGreevy, on his own showing, authorized a solemn falsehood in his declaration in Parliament. We should pity the jury which might have to reach a conclusion on the bare testimony of such witnesses. One would like to accept the sworn statements of a Minister of the Crown and a K. C. M. G., without the slightest suspicion or reservation of any kind. And yet it must be confessed that the theory of Sir Hector's perfect innocence seems so nearly inconceivable, in view of all the circumstances, that one finds himself almost involuntarily searching for double meanings, or for studied ambiguities. If one may be judged to any extent by the characters of those with whom he does business, as well as of those with whom he associates, Sir Hector can hardly complain of such suspicions. How a thoroughly upright administrator could have, for so many years, kept in close business relations with the Department so disreputable a band of boodlers as those composing the now famous firm are shown to be, not less by their own personal admissions than by their mutual testimonies, passes ordinary comprehension. Must one give up all faith in the reliability of moral instincts and perceptions, and in laws of affinity in the ethical sphere? Many men become the dupes of clever knaves once or twice in their lives. Few, indeed, are so unfortunate as to continue blindly their business relations with such, through many years, and after having been repeatedly victimized.

LAST week the area of disturbance in the political atmosphere was materially extended. It has now reached the Senate, and the Railway Committee of that venerable body is engaged in an investigation involving the honesty and honour of the Quebec Local Government. There is still some room to hope that the grave charge which is being pressed by Mr. Barwick, as solicitor for one of the creditors of the old Baie des Chaleurs Railway Company, may be proved baseless, but it must be confessed that appearances are thus far sadly against the supposition. The details are, no doubt, familiar to our readers. The charge is in effect that the Government of Quebec, after having made a grant in aid of the new company which has undertaken to complete and equip that road, and having made it a strict condition of bestowing the grant that a portion of it should be used in paying the *bona fide* claims of creditors of the road, did itself, through the agency of the officer appointed at its suggestion to receive the subsidy, retain \$100,000 of the appropriation thus made, for political purposes. Unfortunately for the accused, Mr. C. N. Armstrong, the creditor of the road, who is said to have been the intermediary in this dishonourable transaction, failed to respond to a summons to give evidence before the Senate Committee. More significant still, the president and promoters of the company, who had been applying for the Dominion Charter as indispensable to the completion of the work, actually sought to withdraw the Bill after Mr. Barwick's statement had been made. Unfortunately, too, for the consistency of some members of the Liberal party, Senators Scott and Power and others of the few Liberals left in the Upper Chamber, strenuously urged that the permission should be granted, and the investigation left for the Opposition in the Quebec Legislature, which would probably have succeeded in carrying through such an enquiry about the time of the Greek

Kalends. Some Conservative Senators, for reasons best known to themselves, joined in the demand that the Company be permitted to withdraw the Bill. This the majority of the Senate very properly refused to do, for, seeing that Dominion subsidies to the extent of more than \$600,000 have been given to the road, nothing can be much clearer than that it is both the right and the duty of the Senate, under the circumstances, to enquire into the truth of so grave a charge of misappropriation of the funds of the railway. The latest news at the time of this writing is that Mr. Armstrong, who, Mr. Barwick insists, must be the first to be examined, will appear before the Committee to-day (Wednesday). Mr. Pacaud, of *L'Electeur*, who, it is alleged, received the money back from Mr. Armstrong, after having formally handed it over to him in the name of the Government, denies the charge *in toto*, and has expressed his willingness to appear, if the time can be arranged so as not to interfere with a trip across the Atlantic for which he had made arrangements. Other witnesses seem to have kept purposely out of the way, so that when the Senate Committee met on Monday not one of those who had been summoned to give evidence appeared. It is probable, however, that all will think better of it if the Senators are found to be in downright earnest. Meanwhile the public can only wait in the fear that another story of disgraceful fraud is about to be added to the already dark record of the Session's discoveries.

THE current session of Parliament has been a most humiliating one to all honest Canadians. The effect upon the reputation of Canadians in general and of those of them in any way connected with the politics and public life of the country in particular, cannot fail to be seriously and lastingly injurious. We cannot complain of the fact. That is merely the outcome of a well understood law of retributive justice. When the people wink at corrupt methods in elections, it is but to be expected that those who gain or retain power by such methods must fail to secure any higher code of honour in those who serve under them in positions of influence or trust. The stream cannot rise above its source. It has often been observed and lamented that too many of those from whom better things might be expected seem to have one system of morals to govern their relations to individuals, and quite another system to govern their relations to the public as an organized body, whether in a municipal or a political capacity. How often is it the case that the man or the woman who would be strictly fair and upright in dealing with a neighbour seems to think it quite pardonable and even creditable to get the better of the corporation in any transaction, or to cheat the Customs or the Post-office, or to obtain two prices for a product or a service from the Provincial or National Government. This shallow and painful trifling with moral standards may often be charitably ascribed to a lack of proper ethical training, or of that moral thoughtfulness which Dr. Arnold rightly prized so highly, and which in many natures can be developed only by careful cultivation of the sense of right and wrong. But if it is painful to find such a deficiency of moral training in the many, what are we to say when we find a similar moral obtuseness in those from whom we should have expected the very opposite? It would be easy to illustrate our meaning from the records of the committees of enquiry now sitting at Ottawa. A Deputy Minister, for instance, fails to see any moral wrong in permitting clerks in a Government office to draw money from the Department, in the name of other persons, real or fictitious, which it would have been illegal to draw in their own. Another official in the service of the Government, himself the son of a Minister, boldly declares, in the presence of a Parliamentary Committee, that he thinks those who hold good contracts from the Government should make liberal donations to the funds of the political party which supports the Government. Nay, a Minister of the Crown himself assures a Parliamentary Committee, with the air of a man who expects applause for the statement, that he has sometimes refused the contract for a public service to the lowest tenderer, in order that he might the better distribute the patronage, as if, forsooth, the management of a branch of the public service meant the distribution of a certain amount of the public funds in the way of patronage,