

NOT PARTY, BUT THE PEOPLE.

THE BYSTANDER.

DECEMBER, 1880.

IN saying that the Pacific Railway Agreement ought to carry with it the assent, not only of a parliamentary majority, but of the nation, we did not mean to advocate a dissolution of Parliament. What we meant was, that the terms should, as soon as possible, be communicated to the country, and that time should be given before the meeting of Parliament for full consideration and discussion, so that the members might go to Ottawa instructed and fortified by the opinions of their constituents. There could be nothing in this derogatory in the slightest degree to the authority of the Legislature, while it would have been a simple act of justice to the country. But we must wait to hear the explanation of the Government.

In addition to the more obvious reasons for obtaining, if possible, the free and indisputable assent of the nation to a compact, the operation of which will extend over a period long enough to give time for more than one change of Government, and more than one change of the national mood, another not so obvious, at least not as yet noticed, may be mentioned. The Provinces of the North-West, as they fill up, will begin to have interests and a will of their own. They will feel their prospective as well as their actual importance, and be no longer content to be dealt with as a mere possession by provinces destined, if the Confederation holds together, to be in proportion