

# THE BYSTANDER.

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OCTOBER, 1883.

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**T**HOUGH the Legislature has not been in session, the struggle of parties has continued, and on the classic field of Rat Portage the Boundary dispute has assumed the aspect of a petty civil war. The fear of bloodshed, which thrilling telegrams had created, was somewhat allayed by the intelligence that the chief of one of the belligerent hosts, Mr. Norquay, in an interval of the fray, had gone out fishing. Only the author of *Hudibras* could have done justice to the heroic struggle. The Government of Ontario, however, has acted rightly in bringing the question to a practical issue, and it might have taken the step before without incurring the charge of precipitation. Whether the Award is open to legal objection, on the ground of deviation from the instructions given to the Arbitrators, legal minds must decide. To us the wording of the instructions appears broad enough. There can be no doubt that, when negotiators have exceeded their powers, ratification may be refused. But Governments are bound by the acts of their predecessors, even though their predecessors may have been of the opposite party. So careful a lawyer as the late Chief Justice Harrison ought to have been able to construe the language of the instrument under which he was appointed. To his fitness and competency, or to those of the other arbitrators, Sir Francis Hincks and Sir Edward Thornton, no reasonable objection can be taken. Sir Francis and Sir Edward are not lawyers; but if none but lawyers could form a judgment on geographical and historical.