

often deep and bitter, as well as unscrupulous, seems at least strange. The only danger is that the prayers may prove to be an empty form, as they have proved in other countries, and that they might ultimately be read by Mr. Speaker to few, except the sergeant-at-arms, the clerks, pages, and door-keepers. It depends upon the House to decide whether this shall be the case here. The members are certainly, as a rule, decorous enough, but it is hard to predicate of the majority any deep sense of religion—any fervent spirit of devotional zeal. It may reasonably be doubted whether the step, however justifiable on the highest grounds, will prove, in practice, a wise one. In so solemn a matter, the desire 'to make a fair show in the flesh' may be infinitely worse than the state of things obtaining heretofore. There are evils to be deprecated more serious than the absence of form, and it may be perfunctory, worship, and amongst them must be reckoned sham, false pretence, hypocrisy. And it may well be a question for the sincerest Christian in the House of Commons, whether the Almighty Maker and Ruler of all things is really honoured by the lip-service, the listless and heartless petitions, of even so dignified a body as that over which Mr. Anglin presides. Surely it would be doing less dishonour to the Father in Heaven not to pray at all than to pray amiss. The Roman Catholic members of the House have done themselves infinite credit by the frank and generous manner in which they have responded to the appeal of their Protestant colleagues in the representation. A slight difficulty has arisen as to the language in which the prayers are to be read. Mr. Langevin, it would seem, 'insisted' that they should be delivered in French, as well as in English, and we suppose that if the hon. gentleman chooses to stand upon his rights as a French Canadian, he must, technically speaking, be sustained. We are disposed to think that the member for Charlevoix is too good an Ultramontane to submit to heretical prayers without protest. He is the brother of a Bishop, as we have had reason to know of late, and wears on his breast the order of St. Gregory; but he certainly ought not to prove recalcitrant when so good a friend of the hierarchy as M. Masson gracefully and cordially supports the member for Centre

Toronto. One point, mooted by the Speaker, was not settled apparently; it was whether the prayers were to be read before or after the doors were opened. It is to be hoped that the latter alternative will be adopted. There is no pretence that legislative devotions are matters of privilege; their ostensible reason is founded upon the theory that they constitute a public recognition of the Deity; that being the case, no proceeding of the House ought to be more public than its prayers. Indeed publicity might have a favourable effect upon the House itself in more ways than one. The Speaker appears to have undertaken the duties of chaplain with cheerfulness, and it will be entered on the chronicles of the time that prayers have been read for the first time, after a long interval, in the Lower House, by a Roman Catholic layman.

Mr. Casey, the persevering champion of civil service reform, has wisely determined to set about the work he has undertaken, early in the session. In order to procure information upon which to base a substantive motion or at least a demand for a select committee of inquiry, he has given notice of a motion for returns. It is fully time that some steps should be taken to place the civil service upon a more satisfactory footing, as well in the interests of the public as of the public servants. It is vain to hope for any effective reform in the service, so long as politicians are permitted to interfere with it, by the exercise of party patronage. Mr. Mackenzie would confer an inestimable boon upon the country, if he would take the subject earnestly in hand and show his moral courage, as well as his energy, by grappling with a gigantic mischief. The first step must be to warn party men, whether in or out of Parliament, off the ground, by at once and definitively abolishing the vicious system which now obtains of giving members, or leaders whose votes are sought, any claim or right whatever to a voice in appointments and promotions. This can only be done by establishing a rigid and inflexible system, which neither cajolery nor threats shall have power to bend or break.

No scheme, merely upon paper, will serve the purpose; that has been tried already and found wanting. In the first place, a