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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE general result of the Ontario elections has not, we suppose, surprised anyone who was in a position to take a calm view of the probabilities. That Mr. Mowat would retain about his former majority in the Legislature must have been foreseen, even by those who endeavoured to keep up their own courage and that of their political friends by predicting a different outcome. The unexpected element in the event was the defeat of two of Mr. Mowat's colleagues. Constituencies are so accustomed to regard it as both an honour and an advantage to have a member of the Government as their representative that very rarely does a candidate occupying such a position, and having the leverage afforded by the patronage and prestige attached to it, suffer rejection, even though it may go hard with many of the rank and file. The causes of the defeat of Messrs. Gibson and Drury are hard to understand. Both are men of good character. Both have proved themselves fairly efficient, as young ministers, in their respective offices. The former, in particular, is a man of good education and more than ordinary ability, while his reputation for uprightness is beyond question. It is pretty evident that local influences of some kind, other than the possibly superior strength of the old Conservative party in Hamilton, must have been at work in the constituency. On the whole, the success of the Government may justly be regarded as a tribute, partly to its generally good record both for useful legislation and honest administration, and very largely to the personal qualities of its Premier. In these days when political scandals are so common, and official scrupulosity so rare, it is no small praise to be able to say of a cabinet that, after many years of successful administration, charges of gross malfeasance in office can hardly be seriously brought against it. Mr. Mowat and his colleagues have not, it is true, escaped accusations of mal-administration of a minor kind, such as those which have been from time to time referred to in these columns. There are certainly some circumstances, such as, for example, those touching certain relations of Government inspectors to the holders of hotel and saloon licenses, which seem to point so clearly in the direction of undue influence that they must, we fear, remain as blots on the record. But, in view of the many merits of the Mowat administration, the high personal character and exceptional ability of

its chief, and the serious risks involved in a transfer of the reins to untried hands, the electors have, no doubt, done wisely to act on the principle that it is better to bear the ills they have than fly to others that they know not of.

NOT the least important of the questions suggested by the political contest just closed is that of the future of the "Equal Rights" discussion. Though the promoters of this movement failed, and were foredoomed to fail, to secure the return of a sufficient number of representatives pledged to their views to make those views a question of practical politics in the Assembly, it cannot be denied that they developed considerable strength during the campaign. The number of votes polled in this city for Messrs. Armour and Bell must have been a surprise to many. Whether the agitation has in it enough of the elements of vitality to enable it to live and gather strength during the coming four years, time only can reveal. Most onlookers are probably expecting to see it now decay and become innocuous until some fresh cause of excitement shall rekindle the embers. Much will depend upon the supply of fuel in the shape of a definite grievance and a practical purpose. The Jesuits' Estates question is at rest and can hardly be revived. The French schools grievance never had in it enough of substantial injustice to make it dangerous, and it, too, is now in abeyance. So far as we are able to divine, the future of the controversy, if it shall have a future, must connect itself almost exclusively with the question of Separate schools. Are Mr. Dalton McCarthy and Dr. Caven and the other influential leaders of the new movement prepared to inscribe on the Equal Rights banner, "Separate schools in Ontario must cease to exist as State-aided institutions?" Though some of them have taken that position clearly enough, all have not, we think, done so. Unless memory fails us we have never heard that Mr. Dalton McCarthy is prepared to take that stand. Be that as it may, this is, it is pretty clear, the only issue that can give the party a standing ground, and a practical right to continued existence. That the Separate schools are wrong in principle, involving, as they do, to a certain extent, a union of Church and State and a violation of religious equality, is very generally conceded, even by the more thoughtful and candid adherents of the old parties. This fact affords a basis for agitation, on the religious and politico-economical sides. There is also much that appeals to the popular judgment and feeling in the declaration that Ontario is entitled to an equal measure of self-rule in the matter with that enjoyed by all the other English-speaking provinces. But if the Equal Rights leaders are prepared to continue the battle on this line—and if not they might as well abandon the field—they should face fairly and manfully the difficulties involved. As we have before said, the constitutional cry seems to us without weight. Though the Ontario Assembly cannot change the Constitution, if the Constitution is ever changed in her interest, the demand must needs emanate from her Legislature. But what about Separate schools in Quebec? What about the Confederation compact, and the right of Quebec to secede if that compact is broken? Above all, what answer on the ground of the highest justice and freedom can be made to the argument of the Roman Catholic who says seriously and honestly, "I believe and hold as one of my profoundest religious convictions, that it is my duty to see that the secular and the religious training of my children are carried on together. I believe there can be no true education apart from religious education. Is it British justice or Christian justice that I should be taxed for the support of schools which I cannot conscientiously use?" We do not say these questions are unanswerable, but we do think it incumbent upon the leaders of any movement for the discontinuance of Separate Catholic schools to discuss and answer them fairly. By doing so successfully they may gain many a waverer.

A VERY vexatious feature of the Ontario franchise law is the provision which causes electors who remove from the constituency for which they are enrolled on the voters' list, before the day of polling, to forfeit their votes. Why should a man who has lived in Ontario all his life be deprived of his vote because six months or six days before

the elections he moves from Etobicoke to Scarboro' or from Toronto to Deer Park? The manhood suffrage act is greatly marred by a provision which, it is safe to say, disfranchised hundreds of electors in the contest of last week. The whole electoral machinery of Canada is, we think, greatly in need of simplification. The Dominion Franchise Act is notorious for clumsiness and inefficiency. The manhood suffrage law of Ontario is far better, but it is hedged about with too many conditions and restrictions. In every election both in the Province and in the Dominion thousands of thoroughly qualified Canadians are unable to vote because, through some omission or technicality, their names are not on the voters' list. It is too much to expect electors to be continually watching these lists to see that their names are not only put on but kept on. Moreover, elections are constantly being held—as was the case last week in Toronto—on old and unrevised lists. Every man qualified to vote and resident in the Province or the Dominion on polling day should have his vote secured to him. Cannot something simpler and better be substituted for the complicated voters' list system? In most parts of the United States the polling-places are opened on some day previous to the elections, and every voter registers his name in the division in which he resides. To our mind some such system of registration—with due safeguards against fraud and personation—would, at least for general elections, be a vast improvement on the present Canadian plans.

SO far as we have observed, the usual cry of "bribery and corruption" has not been raised to any great extent by either party in connection with the recent election. In two or three constituencies, it is true, it has been hinted by friends of the defeated candidate that votes were purchased or other corrupt agencies employed, and that protests may be entered; but these cases are exceptional. It is not unreasonable to infer that the absence of any general charges of wholesale corruption means that there was no reason to suspect that such corruption was attempted on any considerable scale. This is a happy and hopeful circumstance, to whatever cause it may be attributed. It may be that the difficulty and uncertainty attending the use of bribes under the ballot system are making it unprofitable and hence unpopular, or that the danger of detection and punishment by the courts is found to overbalance any doubtful advantage that can be gained by dishonest means. But there is some reason to hope that the fact is largely due to an improved public sentiment. We have, on a former occasion, pointed out some indications that a healthful reaction is setting in against the various forms of corruption in public life which have been all too prevalent for many years past. In the history of a nation as of an individual there sometimes comes a day of reform. More than one such period of moral uplifting can be traced in the political history of the Mother Country. It is a comfort to be able to cherish even a faint hope that we in Canada may be entering on a new era in politics, and that the public mind is beginning to revolt against practices in regard to which it has too long been wilfully obtuse. No doubt the perceptible weakening of the bonds of partyism has something to do with this better state of things, though whether its relation to it is that of cause, or of effect, it may be hard to say.

A PROMINENT minister of the Methodist Church took occasion, at the recent annual meeting of the Conference of that body in Montreal, to call attention to the order of official precedence, as established and observed in Canada. Objection was taken particularly to the position accorded to dignitaries of the Catholic and Episcopal Churches, while the ministers of other churches, no matter how influential, receive no recognition whatever. It is convenient and desirable, no doubt, that some well understood order of precedence should be observed at state receptions and similar occasions, to prevent confusion and relieve the presiding officials of what would otherwise be the very delicate and invidious task of assigning places to the assembled dignitaries. As the *Mail* has pointed out, the order now established in conformity with British precedent brings about some rather singular arrangements, as when it places an ex-Governor of Sir John A. Macdonald's appointment, now holding a subordinate office in