

The Copyright
Question.

Some of the English papers are speaking severely of Sir Charles H. Tupper's outspoken declaration of Canada's right to govern or misgovern herself in the copyright business, as in all other matters reserved for her jurisdiction under the B. N. A. Act. It may be that the Minister's language was blunter than the occasion demanded. We are inclined to think that, if correctly reported, it was to some extent wanting in the courteous phraseology in which usage requires public men to refer to delicate questions, whether of international or of inter-Imperial concern. It may be said, also, that his haste to declare against the possibility of conference between the delegate of British Authors and the Ottawa Administration may have been and probably was rather premature, as it would have been soon enough to decline a courteous request for an interview with the representative of a highly respectable body of British citizens when it had been asked for. But in regard to the first matter we have little doubt that Sir Charles will be sustained, on the main point, by the opinions of the great majority of Canadians. The action of the Home Government in this business from the first has been such as to suggest that, as time passes, new British statesmen may be in some danger of forgetting the change which the B. N. A. Act brought about in the relation of the Confederated colonies to the British Government. It is hinted that the new Copyright Act, which is to be submitted to the Ottawa Government as a substitute for the rejected one, is to contain an assertion of Canada's right to legislate in the matter. Such a preamble would seem to many to make the case worse rather than better, seeing that Canada has not, in fact, been permitted to exercise that right, and would not evidently be now permitted to do so, should she refuse to modify her original Act to suit the views of the British authors and publishers, and those of the Colonial Office as based upon these.

The Authors'
Representative.

As we have said, we have no doubt that the Canadian Government will listen courteously to any representations which Mr. Hall Caine, or any other accredited representative of the British Authors, may have to make with regard to the proposed Copyright legislation. At the same time it cannot be amiss to remind those authors and their publishers that their proposal to take counsel with the only Government which has a right to deal with the business comes a little late in the day. Had these gentlemen had the courtesy and grace to make their representations at Ottawa in the first instance, thus recognizing Canada's autonomy in the matter, it might have been much easier for the Ministry to give them a patient hearing. It can hardly be denied that the course they have preferred, in going direct to the British Government with their pleas and protests, thereby showing that they were either ignorant of Canada's position in regard to the matter, or were determined not to recognize the constitutional rights of a colony, has not made the process of conciliation and mutual concession easier. Whether Mr. Caine comes now at the suggestion of the Colonial office, or on the sole initiative of the body he represents, we do not know, but a Canadian can scarcely resist a feeling of surprise and chagrin that the Home Government did not see fit to refer complaints to Ottawa in the first instance. That might have saved trouble and delay, and would certainly have been a gratifying proof of full recognition of Canada's constitutional rights in the premises.

The Premier at
Winnipeg.

If the reports which have been telegraphed from Winnipeg, of the conference between Premier Bowell and some of his political friends in that city, may be relied on, the Premier is certainly not wanting in frankness, what ever may be his deficiencies in other respects. The more high-minded among his auditors seem to have resented strongly his intimation that they were there to get all they could out of the Government, irrespective of the merits of their claims. When this sweeping and rather harsh indictment was indignantly repudiated, the Premier scarcely mended the matter by saying that if those before him were not of that kind they must stand out in marked contrast to all other constituencies in which this was unmistakably the case. The Premier's bluntness on this and other occasions was unnecessary and will hardly have strengthened the cause of his party in the West. Nevertheless, in making it unmistakably clear that he would commit himself to no rash promises of money expenditures, for the sake of strengthening his Government, he set an example worthy of all imitation. It has often seemed to us that nothing could be much more out of taste, or lacking in common courtesy, than the eagerness which is almost always shown by party supporters, when about to receive a visit from any member of a Government, Dominion or Provincial, to pelt him with petitions or representations in support of some claim for the expenditure of Government money in the constituency. The Premier's language was, we hope, much too strong in describing the practice as universal, and seems to stamp him as a political pessimist, so far at least as the character of constituencies is concerned. But on the other hand, to say the very least, such an attempt to get the ear of the Government, and, if possible, a promise from its chief, is taking an unfair advantage of him, and, what is still more to be deprecated, of those constituencies which he is unable to visit in person, and which cannot, therefore, bring local and personal influence to bear in the same way. If all ministers so assailed would but make as short work of their assailants as Premier Bowell seems to have done, a bad custom would soon be discontinued and a higher tone given to the addresses of travelling ministers.

The Water-Works
Problem.

Pending the decisive vote of the people, which is to be taken in a few weeks upon the question of the construction of the tunnel, the Toronto City Council will do well to get all the additional light possible, in order to make assurance doubly sure. We have from the first maintained that the tunnel is the most natural solution of the problem, albeit an expensive one. The conditions seem simple enough. The water is to be had in abundance and of excellent quality, in Lake Ontario, a few hundred yards beyond the Island. Common sense, after a survey of the other possible schemes, declares that this is the amplest, the best and the most accessible source of supply. But in order to bring it uncontaminated and in sufficient quantity into our homes and factories and hydrants, it must be brought, through, or over, or under, the polluted bay which lies between us and the source of supply. Which shall it be? Of the present method, through the bay, we have had enough and more than enough. The overhead conduit may be practicable, and possibly has not been sufficiently considered, but it strikes most minds as chimerical. To the inexpert the tunnel commends itself as at once combining all the elements of certainty, safety, and permanence. The only question, a crucial one, it is true, is that of engineering feasibility. Can the tunnel be constructed at a cost fairly within the means of Toronto? Can its absolute safety from leakage be assured? These are vital questions. A failure in