

ment and Legislature; and since in the exercise of their discretion and power these authorities had been pleased to pass the measure, there was no constitutional ground for its disallowance. A Provincial law may properly be vetoed if it is found to be *ultra vires*, or if it interferes with any Imperial or Dominion authority, but not otherwise if it is within the constitutional power of the Province. If there is room for doubt as to the constitutionality of an Act it is held to be better to leave the doubt to be settled by the courts than to have the Dominion settle the matter by disallowance.

These are the general principles now recognized as governing the question of disallowance. An application of them to the present case seems to show clearly that no good ground for the disallowance of the Ontario Act respecting the Ottawa School Commission was made out. So far as the merits of the law are concerned, that is clearly a question for the Ontario Government and Legislature, not for the Ottawa Cabinet. As to the constitutionality of the law, the Ontario courts have upheld it, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London will shortly be asked to review the Ontario decision.

Interesting as this branch of the subject is, what has occurred does nothing to help towards a settlement of the bilingual trouble. Nor will anything be accomplished by the ultimate decision of the Privy Council on the legal questions involved. All decisions respecting disallowance and constitutional disputes will leave the question still to disturb the Province, and perhaps the Dominion. It is not a question that can be happily settled by legal tribunals. It is one that can only be settled by the manifestation on both sides of a spirit of conciliation and goodwill. Three things are essential to the settlement of the controversy:

1. Recognition of the right of the Ontario Government and Legislature to direct the educational affairs of their Province, subject to the provisions of the B. N. A. Act respecting denominational schools.

2. Adequate instruction in English, the language of the great majority of Canadians, a knowledge of which is necessary to every child who is to have a fair chance in the battle of life.

3. A reasonable proportion of French tuition in schools attended chiefly by children of French people, whose natural desire to have their children taught their mother tongue is entirely commendable.

These things are not necessarily conflicting. They should be found easily reconcilable by those who approach the subject in the right spirit.

The Irish Rebellion

REBELLION is not too strong a word now, although but a few days ago it would have been regarded as not possible of application to any Irish condition. In the presence of startling events such as have occurred in Ireland within the past few days some heads must go into the basket. So Mr. Augustin Birrell, long Irish Secretary in the Cabinet, has resigned, and the Under Secretary, Sir Matthew Nathan, an old public official, has followed him into retirement. Mr. Birrell acknowledges frankly and sadly that he made a mistake—a mistake almost everybody will be ready to call it now—in his policy of refraining as far as he possibly could from harsh measures in his treatment of Irish difficulties. For many years it was a disputed question whether coercion or conciliation should be adopted as the Irish

policy. Many British statesmen sincerely believed that only a policy of stern repression and severe punishment would meet the Irish situation. Yet, it is clear that whatever might be said of the other course, coercion always failed to produce order and contentment.

The Irish people—the majority of them—had grievances, or at all events they believed they had, and governed themselves accordingly. Other British statesmen thought that it was time to try a different method of treatment. Irishmen thought that some, if not all of their difficulties, could be met by the Home Rule policy. Doubtless, to many of them Home Rule meant at first the idea of an independent Ireland. But it soon became evident that Home Rule of that kind was impossible and to only a few of the Irish was it deemed desirable. Constitutional Home Rule—liberty for Irishmen to manage their local affairs while retaining their position as a part of the British Empire—became the settled policy of a great British political party, and the mass of the discontented Irish people regarded that policy as one which would be acceptable to them. Unfortunately there were some Irishmen who were not willing to be satisfied. Some of these, no doubt, were sincere in their view that there could be no happiness for Ireland except through independence and a Republic. Others, probably, were less sincere, but too ready to participate in any movement of a disorderly character. Under ordinary conditions the mad freaks of the Sinn Fein party might have been treated lightly. Mr. Birrell, apparently, thought that it was better to allow them a large measure of freedom than to return to the old-time methods of coercion. Probably if there had been no external trouble Mr. Birrell's mild policy would have worked well. But the agents of Germany evidently encouraged the Sinn Fein men to believe that this was their opportunity to strike and that they would receive German help in a movement against Great Britain. It was this new situation that Mr. Birrell failed to understand, or at all events failed to meet. An outbreak came which proved to be much more serious than anybody had supposed possible. Of course, there could be but one ending of it. The rebellion has been quickly crushed. Several of its leaders have been shot. Nearly all their followers have surrendered. There is little danger of further serious trouble. The terrible consequences of the mad movement will strike terror into the hearts of others who may have been ill-disposed.

There are not wanting people who point to these events as evidence that the British policy of leniency in relation to Irish affairs has proved a failure. The ground is not well taken. There is another thought that suggests itself. If such disorders were possible after Home Rule had been virtually granted, what would have been the condition of Ireland, the attitude of the Irish people in relation to the Empire, if the opponents of Home Rule had been successful and Ireland had been governed in the spirit that prevailed before the Home Rule policy was adopted by the British Government? Sterner methods to repress the crazy Sinn Fein organizations might perhaps have been wiser. But it is not too much to say, on the general question concerning the rival policies of coercion and conciliation, that the adoption of the latter policy, with the granting of a Home Rule measure now on the statute book and soon to come into operation, brought about a situation in Ireland which has led the great mass of the Irish people to enter with all their heart into the Imperial cause in this time of crisis—a tremendous fact that cannot be wiped out by the folly and crime of the Sinn

Fein madmen. Coercion did not triumph. Conciliation has not failed.

The Latest Note

THE latest German note to the United States seems to have been designed to prolong the discussion between the two Governments, and it may for a little while have this effect. It professes to give assurances, not as a matter of right, but entirely as an evidence of the German desire to maintain friendly relations, of a yielding to some extent to the American demand. But in reality it yields nothing substantial. It expresses a desire to modify the submarine policy, but seems to make the alleged desire subject to the doing of some things by the British Government in relation to the blockade against supplies for Germany. The attempt to meet complaints of American citizens by counter complaints against England is not very clever, and it is not likely to mislead the American authorities. If America has any grievance against England, Americans will naturally desire to settle it with England, without any interference on the part of Germany. The German note really concedes nothing to the United States, and it is in several parts distinctly offensive to the American Government. But it may serve the German purpose of forming some excuse for further delay on the part of the United States respecting the threatened severance of diplomatic relations.

A Consular Trouble

IT is seldom that Canadians are called upon to take exception to the actions of representatives of foreign nations residing in Canada. As a rule these gentlemen prove their wisdom by carefully refraining from any statement of facts that can be challenged, or any expression of opinion on Canadian conditions that is objectionable to our Canadian people. It is therefore surprising to find in the American press statements emanating from the United States Consul at Vancouver concerning labor conditions in British Columbia that are declared by good authority to be at variance with the facts and calculated to do harm to Canadian interests as respects immigration from the United States. It is well, before forming judgment in matters of this kind, to have the most careful enquiry into the case, so that the Consul at Vancouver may not be held responsible for words that he did not use. But if, as a result of this inquiry, it be found that the Consul has been unwise enough to put into circulation reports of an inaccurate and misleading character, the United States Government will probably find that his usefulness as a representative is gone. It is fortunate that the matter will come under review by such an experienced Consul General as Mr. J. G. Foster, at Ottawa. That gentleman, by long service at Halifax and Ottawa, has proved himself a capable and valuable representative of his country, and he may be relied on to require from the subordinate Consuls the exercise of the discretion which he at all times exhibits.

The Toronto office of the Union Bank of Canada has issued, for the information of its customers and all others who desire it, a pamphlet entitled "Essential Features of the Business Profits Tax Act, 1916." It is a very useful booklet, containing in a condensed form the main provisions of an Act to which business men will frequently have occasion to refer.