

menced in good faith and with at least reasonable hope of success. But the difficulties in the way of such success are surely formidable. If our memory is not greatly at fault, it was repeatedly avouched on oath by the parties who paid these commissions that the prices of the goods furnished were not increased a dollar in consequence. That seems, it is true, very like a story for Apella, but yet it is not altogether improbable that in view of the large amounts of the orders the customary rates may have admitted of this liberal dealing with the purchasers and yet have been profitable for the sellers. Whether proof to that effect would defeat the Government's claim, we do not know. Probably it would still be held that the Government was entitled to the benefit of this reduction from regular rates, and could have secured it but for the bribery of the official. But aside from all such speculations as to the interesting questions that must come up on trial of these remarkable cases, it will be a cause for general congratulation if it should prove that the merchant who allows his eagerness to accomplish a sale to tempt him into tampering with the honour and conscience of a public servant, in a position of trust, can be held legally liable to the extent of the full amount of any improper pecuniary inducements he may employ in order to accomplish his ends. It would perhaps have been still more gratifying had the action been thought possible on other grounds, and the persons paying such commissions been found punishable for the offence of corrupting a public servant in the discharge of the duties of his office.

THE summary dismissal of his constitutional advisers by the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec marks the beginning of an agitation of which it is not easy to foresee the end. That a Governor has, in extreme cases, the right to thus rid himself of a Ministry which still possesses the confidence of a majority of the people's representatives, few will be disposed to question, however opinions may differ as to the justice or wisdom of exercising the right in a given case. There can be little doubt that the constitutional aspect of the question is correctly presented in the words which a newspaper correspondent ascribes to Dr Bourinot:—

The Lieut.-Governor, like the Governor-General, has full constitutional power to dismiss the body of men who act as his constitutional advisers on all affairs of State. It is for him alone, as the head of the Executive, to consider whether the public reasons are sufficient to justify the extreme step, open to him under the constitutional system of England and Canada, of dismissing his advisers. But he must at the same time call to his counsel a new set of advisers who will be prepared to accept full responsibility for his acts and to justify them to the Legislature and the country.

Lieutenant-Governor Angers has taken upon himself the serious responsibility of deciding that the evidence of malfeasance in office is sufficient to warrant him in unceremoniously dismissing the Mercier Administration and calling upon a leading member of the Opposition to form a Ministry. That conclusion is based upon an interim report of two of the Commissioners, prepared, it is believed, at the earnest solicitation of the Lieutenant-Governor, in view of the fact that the illness of Judge Jetté renders it impossible that the drawing up of the final report can be completed for some weeks to come. There is, it must be confessed, some room for difference of opinion as to the completeness of the justification afforded by the document submitted to Mr. Angers for his precipitate action. That the charges which were made the subject of enquiry before the Commission were ample, if sustained, to warrant the most decisive action is unquestionable. That the circumstantial evidence available was remarkably strong and, indeed, of such a kind as to make it well-nigh impossible to reconcile it with any theory of the innocence of the accused is equally well known. But that the evidence adduced in Court of guilty complicity on the part of Mr. Mercier and his colleagues was sufficient, in the face of their sworn denials, to warrant a verdict of "Guilty," many were disposed to doubt. For this reason the public have been awaiting with unusual interest the report of the Commissioners in order to learn from it what impression the evidence as a whole produced upon the minds of three gentlemen, trained in the weighing of testimony, bound by every consideration of professional honour to the strictest impartiality, and guided by such a study of the whole case as no one else could give. Rumours of a most contradictory character are now current in respect to the very important question of the unanimity of the Commissioners. The partisans of the dismissed Ministry allege

that Judge Jetté dissents from the conclusions of his colleagues, and that the report upon which Lieutenant-Governor Angers has acted is, therefore, only that of a majority. But it is obvious that this is a question of the very first importance.

PRIMARILY the question at issue in Quebec is one of administrative purity. Unhappily, however, as seems inevitable under the party system, at least as it is operated in Canada, the spirit of partyism is intensely active in the affair and has been so from the first. To so great an extent is this the case that there is very great danger that the whole contest, which is now inevitable in Quebec, may be carried on and decided on purely partisan principles. Such being the state of things it was greatly to be desired that the conduct of the affair by the Lieutenant-Governor should be scrupulously free from anything that could be plausibly construed as an indication of party bias. There is some reason to fear that this cannot be safely affirmed of Lieut.-Governor Angers' procedure. It would be, to say the least, an extremely unfortunate precedent, should the Lieut.-Governor, after delivering this *coup*, be received into the Federal Cabinet at an early day, according to current rumour. The Lieut.-Governor's refusal to make known the contents of Judge Jetté's note seems unfortunate. It seems fairly open to question whether the interview which is said, without contradiction so far as we are aware, to have taken place between the Lieut.-Governor and those two members of the Commission who were formerly, like himself, active members of the party opposed to Mr. Mercier's Government, should have taken place. Mr. Angers must be considered as having occupied in relation to the enquiry to some extent the position of an interested party, and as such it is not easy to see why it should be more seemly for the Judges in the case to have consulted him in reference to the verdict, or have exposed themselves to a suspicion of having done so, than to have done the same thing in regard to Mr. Mercier himself—an act which would no doubt have been deemed most reprehensible. We make this remark with some hesitation and shall be glad to stand corrected if we have overlooked some circumstance or consideration which puts a different face upon the matter. But if it be said that Mr. Angers had a right, as Head of the Executive, to ask for an interim report, it may be replied that for constitutional reasons the Commission was not appointed by himself personally, but in Council, and that it would seem a fair inference that only the appointing power had a right to give further instructions. The right of the Lieut.-Governor to dismiss his advisers and summon others, subject to the conditions mentioned by Dr. Bourinot, by no means implies his right to perform, personally, any other Executive act whatever, if indeed that can be properly considered an act of the Executive. There is another point upon which we should like much to have the opinion of Dr. Bourinot, or some other authority on constitutional questions. It is, we think, well understood that the plan of Government by party is a recognized part of our constitutional system, or of its machinery, and that the Queen or her representative in any given case, is bound to exercise strict impartiality as between the two parties, and to have scrupulous regard in any necessary use of the prerogative, to the views of the majority. If this be granted, does it not follow that in case of being called on to dismiss, on the ground of personal misdoing, the members of a Government having the support of a large majority of the representatives of the people and so presumably of the people themselves, it would be the duty of the Head of the Executive to select his new advisers from the party of the dismissed Ministers? Is not the act of choosing them from the opposite party equivalent to an implication that the corruption is characteristic of the party and not merely of the individuals who have been found guilty of it—an implication which the impartial representative of royalty has no right to make? It may be said, of course, that the assumption of responsibility by the new advisers covers the ground. But that is hardly a satisfactory answer, since it is well known that the *de facto* Government has always a tremendous advantage in an appeal to the people, and it would therefore be often in the power of a partisan Governor to bring about a change of the party in power by the dismissal of his advisers on some plausible pretext. In the present instance, the course pursued by Mr. Angers is not unlikely to lead to serious difficulties of another kind. If, as is far from unlikely, the result of the general election which must almost surely be held, should be the return of a majority of Mr. Mercier's supporters, the last

state of things would be worse than the first. Either the resignation of Mr. Angers, and the triumph of Mercierism, or a conflict between the Province and the Dominion, would then be, so far as we can see, inevitable.

THE judgment pronounced by Justices Rose and MacMahon on Saturday, to the effect that the free tickets on which certain voters in the North Perth election were carried to the polls by the Grand Trunk Railway were furnished by the railway and not paid for by agents of the candidate, and that therefore no violation of the law was committed, carries with it conclusions of grave importance. It is of course a perfectly reasonable interpretation of the Statute, there being no legal reason why a railroad should not be allowed to give free carriage to the voters of the party it favours as well as a keeper of a livery stable or a private individual. The only question really before the Court was that of the responsibility of the party agents for the cost of the tickets. But it is of no little importance in its bearing upon future contests that it is now settled by a clear judicial decision that the railways are at liberty to do all in their power in this way to determine the issue of an election. Another mighty means of influence in politics is thus placed in the hands of those great corporations whose power in relation to the Government of the country is already so great as to have become a cause of serious alarm to many thoughtful citizens. The Liberals have little reason to congratulate themselves on the result, which, while it saves the seat of one of their representatives, and assures them for the present the influence of the Grand Trunk, lets loose against them the still greater influence of the Canadian Pacific, which there is good reason to believe has not been and will not be a whit behind its rival in zeal and liberality on behalf of the party of its choice. It is very unlikely that a Parliament and people who have gone so far in the attempt to prevent the use of undue influence in elections will be content to permit such a state of things as is foreshadowed in this judicial decision, to exist. And yet it is not easy to see how any special legislation can be enacted to meet the case without a seemingly unfair and invidious discrimination against the railway corporations. Possibly sufficient ground for enforcing impartiality on these companies, in distinction from all others, might be found in the peculiar relation in which they stand to the public, as having been granted extraordinary powers in regard to the property of individuals and having also in many cases received direct aid from the public funds. But the direct and logical way in which to render them comparatively powerless is one which we have frequently advocated on other grounds—the introduction of the "one-man, one-vote" system. The adoption of this system is, in any event, but a question of time. The decision of the Court in the matter in question adds another to the many cogent reasons hitherto urged in its behalf, and will probably hasten the day of its coming.

THAT nation is to be envied whose statesmen have ability, time and inclination to turn aside occasionally from the anxieties and perplexities of political life to discuss those larger questions which lie beyond the range of even the broadest statesmanship, to say nothing of the petty politics which unhappily occupy so large a share of the time and attention of those who have to do with affairs of State, at least in this western hemisphere. It is characteristic of the better class of British statesmen that they are able and disposed to do this to a greater extent than those of any other nation. The latest illustration of this may be found in the very thoughtful and scholarly address which was recently delivered by Mr. Balfour, now leader of the Government in the House of Commons, before the University of Glasgow. Mr. Balfour's address was on a subject which, however abstruse in itself, is of profound interest to every thoughtful mind. It was intended to show that we have no sufficient grounds for cherishing that vague but pleasing optimism which regards the progress of the race as an immutable truth, grounded on the unchangeableness of a natural law, operating beyond and above the sphere of human will and effort. We have but an outline of the lecture before us, and cannot pretend to deal with it in any broad way. One or two points may, however, be adverted to with tolerable safety. Mr. Balfour made, for instance, the very interesting point that if the law referred to be the law of evolution, as generally accepted, that law worked in the past by a process of elimination which has long since ceased to operate in the more highly civilized communities. Instead of the weaker and less effective members of this community being elimi-