

THE tardy reports of the Dominion Labour Commission will afford abundant food for study and discussion during the Parliamentary recess. It is unfortunate, though in view of the mixed character of the Commission not surprising, that its members were unable to agree in all their conclusions and recommendations. A unanimous report would have carried weight as a basis for legislation, which is to some extent lost in consequence of the division. Nevertheless, even the points of agreement cover many important particulars, upon which, it is reasonable to suppose, action will be taken at the next session of Parliament. Among the most urgent of the legislative reforms which all the Commissioners are agreed in recommending we should be inclined to reckon those forbidding the practice of inflicting fines upon employees, compelling payment in currency and not in scrip, establishing boards of arbitration to settle labour disputes, prohibiting the sale of liquor in the vicinity of mines, and asking for the establishment of a Dominion Labour Bureau. The points of divergence between the reports of the members of the board representing capital and those representing labour are numerous, including, as might have been expected, such questions as those concerning assisted immigration, contract alien labour, prison labour, the provisions for the safety of employees on railways, in ships, factories, etc. Many of these points are worthy of the most careful consideration. They will, no doubt, come up from time to time for discussion.

"IMPERIAL Federation is a dream," said Lord Derby to an American interviewer the other day. It is, no doubt, a grand and inspiring dream, as Dr. Grant showed in his eloquent lecture at Kingston the other day, but it is a dream, nevertheless, in its visionary and impracticable character, as the first serious attempt to realize it will no doubt make plain. Some of the questions asked and answers given by Dr. Grant are very suggestive. That Canada is not at the present moment in a position of stable equilibrium is but too clear to all observers. That this instability is the outcome of imperfect political development, and is a necessary incident of her present stage of colonial growth, many will be equally ready to admit. There can, we think, be little doubt that her slow increase in population in comparison with her Republican neighbour is, partially at least, due to this instability. Emigrants of the most desirable classes will, other things being equal, naturally prefer the country which has reached full political manhood, and is consequently able to confer full citizenship. But if political manhood is possible for Canada only in the full citizenship which Imperial Confederation would confer, she is, we are persuaded, doomed to perpetual infancy. Look at the picture as Dr. Grant suggests it. A population of 5,000,000 in America united in the bonds of commercial and political union with 315,000,000 in Great Britain, at the Antipodes, and all over the globe. Does history give us a single instance of equal, successful, genuine union between two peoples separated by even a thousand miles of ocean? Consider how completely the political influence of the 5,000,000 would be swallowed up and lost in the 320,000,000. One vote in 64 would have about as much effect in changing the current of legislation on a question of commerce, or of peace and war, as a pebble in a flowing stream. Lord Derby's words are pregnant with meaning which all Canadians will do well to ponder. "Imperial Federation implies common action and the submission of the minority to the majority." When the minority stands to the majority in the proportion of one to sixty-four it is not difficult to form an idea of what that means.

GOVERNMENT having taken charge of the Copyright Act, the prospects of its becoming law this session are again hopeful. The chief provisions of the proposed Act we have before described. The principle of the Bill can hardly fail to be approved by a large majority of the members on both sides of the House. This is another piece of legislation which trenches upon the prerogatives which the British Parliament has hitherto reserved to itself. In view of the influence which British publishers may bring to bear there is perhaps greater danger of objection to this Bill, on the part of the British Government, than even to the Extradition Act. It is noteworthy that while both the Premier and the Minister of Justice seem to admit that the proposals of the Bill conflict with the Imperial Act, both seem firmly of opinion that the case is one in which the right to legislate in our own interest should be firmly insisted on. The serious injustice and hardship resulting to Canadian publishers under the present system were clearly set forth by Sir John Thomp-

son, and are so patent that it is difficult to believe that the British Government can fail to yield to their force.

WHY this periodical hurrying and scurrying every session at Ottawa? As spring approaches Government and Opposition seem to vie with each other in their anxiety to bring the session to a close at the earliest possible moment. Is there any obligation in the Decalogue, or in the nature of things, which makes it imperative that Parliament be prorogued before a certain day? We had supposed that the duty of a deliberative Assembly was to deliberate, and that of a Legislature to legislate, and that the duties imposed by the people upon their representatives implied that whatever time was necessary for the purpose should be taken. The proper time to end the session would seem to be when its work was properly done. But, instead of the limit being fixed by the needs of legislation, it seems to be becoming the fashion to fix the time limit arbitrarily or at convenience and let the legislation govern itself accordingly. The consequence is that the last two or three weeks of every session are marked by a restlessness which must be anything but favourable to legislative calmness. The Opposition reproach the Government with intentional delay for the very purpose of preventing full discussion, or, in other words, with striving to defeat the end for which the Parliament exists. The Government retorts by blaming the long speeches and obstructive tactics of the Opposition. We shall not attempt to apportion the guilt. But it is clear that such haste and recrimination must tend not only to impair the character of the legislation—generally the most important of the session—rushed through during these last days, but also to create or foster popular distrust of the whole legislative machinery which is so jerky in its working. If the fact be, as the Opposition so loudly assert, that the Government purposely delays important and doubtful measures, in order that they may escape searching criticism, the very best means of correcting the evil would be for the Opposition to let it be understood that they were prepared to remain at their posts just as long as might be necessary for the faithful discharge of the duty for which they were elected.

HALF a million dollars additional is a large sum to be taken annually for a single object from the Dominion exchequer, already too largely overdrawn. It is no wonder that many Members of Parliament demurred at the liberal subsidies proposed by the Government for the new steamship lines. And yet these lines of swift steamers connecting our Atlantic seaboard with Europe, and our Pacific seaboard with Australia, China and Japan, are the logical complements of the great Canadian railway. No one could suppose that Canada can, for long years to come, furnish local and transcontinental traffic sufficient to keep the Canadian Pacific Railway in operation or enable it to pay running expenses. Only as a stupendous link in a great chain of travel and commerce encircling the globe could the building of this highway have been justified. Only in such wise can it be expected to bring in any adequate returns for the vast amount of capital and labour lavished in its construction. Whether a steamboat service of the frequency and speed required could have been obtained at less expense by waiting to give private enterprise full scope; whether slower and cheaper lines would have served the purpose almost equally well, at greatly reduced cost; whether the arrangements now proposed, the methods adopted, the contracts made, were the best possible under the circumstances,—these are legitimate questions and should be fully answered. The Opposition seem to have just cause for complaint of the very meagre information in regard to them furnished by the Government. The sums to be voted are far too large to be entrusted to any Government, without the fullest and most satisfactory particulars. But of the soundness of the policy itself, under existing circumstances, there seems really no room for doubt. The results may be all we hope for. The route may prove less popular and attractive than is anticipated. The amount of travel and traffic may be immense, and yet the material benefits to Canada be found seriously disappointing. In regard to all these matters we can but hope for the best. But, in any case, to have stopped short of carrying out the grand scheme to its result by completing the channels of communication with Europe and the great East would, now that the Canadian Pacific is completed, have been short-sighted and timorous in the extreme.

MOST honest Canadians will approve the action of the Government in putting Dr. Weldon's Extradition Bill amongst Government Orders, in order to secure its

discussion if not its passage before the close of the Session. Why should Canada continue to be an asylum for United States thieves? It is time this reproach were put away from us. If we wish to punish the Washington politicians for refusing to give us back our own defaulters, the penalty is one of a kind which falls much more heavily upon those who inflict than upon those who undergo it. It is incomparably more harmful to Canadian reputation and character to harbour embezzlers, betrayers of trust, and other unprincipled men from abroad, than it is to our neighbours to be unable to recover them. The people of the United States are well recompensed for the loss of a good deal of money by being rid of so large a number of dishonest men. Canada, on the other hand, suffers not only loss of self-respect by reason of their presence on her soil, but also incurs serious danger of moral contamination, by the influence and example of those who may be unconsciously taken as object lessons, setting forth the advantages of successful rascality. Nor do we believe there is much reason to fear an Imperial veto. Times have changed even since Mr. Mills' Bill, drawn on somewhat similar lines, was objected to by the British Government seventeen years ago. England can have little to gain, while Canada has much to lose, by perpetuating the present noxious state of things. The moral right of the Mother Country to require her colony to suffer moral injury for political ends is more than doubtful. The danger that Canada may put it out of her power to grant asylum to political refugees from the great Republic is too remote and chimerical to be worthy of consideration. The opportunity to heap coals of fire on our neighbour's head, and at the same time do our own country a real service is too good to be lost.

THE Minister of Customs has done well in yielding to the force of public opinion in the matter of adding the cost of inland transportation to the invoice price in determining the value on which to assess the duty on imported goods. The rule or law under which that was done was simply indefensible in principle. That being the case neither any amount of increase of revenue it unfairly secured, nor any indirect protective effect it might be supposed to have, could justify it in practice. In these times when the whole country is ablaze with denunciations of the alleged Jesuistic teaching that the end justifies the means, the Government of the country cannot afford to adhere to any course of conduct whose sole defence rests on such a basis. This remark has even a stronger application to those other obnoxious methods of the Customs' Department which are being now so vigorously assailed. We refer to the mode of procedure in the case of firms suspected of undervaluation, or other devices for defrauding the revenue. We fully recognize the great difficulty under which the Department labours, in its efforts to enforce the Customs' Act strictly and impartially. The temptation to fraud is great. The modes of perpetrating it are many. And, unhappily, the number of persons who deem it no crime to cheat the revenue in such a manner, is far too numerous, even among those who would scorn to be guilty of an act of downright dishonesty of another kind. In many cases it would, we dare say, be well nigh impossible to discover the fraud by the ordinary methods of detection. Desperate diseases are supposed to require desperate remedies, and it is not hard to understand how the Government may deem itself almost driven to the exercise of a species of *surveillance*, and to the use of despotic measures, which are really incompatible with the liberty of the subject in a free country.

FROM the days of King John and the *Magna Charta* until now Englishmen and their descendants have been jealous in guarding the freedom of the subject and the rights of property against the encroachments of the ruling power. By a series of progressions from law to law and precedent to precedent the limits to this freedom and these rights have become in the main so clearly outlined and so firmly fixed, that the meanest subject is believed to be completely secured against arbitrary interference, even by the Sovereign. What then shall be said of the state of things under which, on mere suspicion, Government officers may enter a citizen's private warehouse or retail shop, seize his goods, close his place of business, carry off his ledgers, letters, invoices and other papers, and retain possession of the whole, pending an investigation in which the ordinary maxims of the courts are reversed, and the accused is called on to prove his innocence on pain of being held guilty and punished accordingly? The charge is perhaps one of undervaluation of goods, on which the duty assessed