

THE somewhat unusual course of the Dominion Government in causing it to be announced that the Minister of Justice had reported that the Jesuits' Estates Act is *intra vires* of the Quebec Legislature, and that, consequently it will be allowed to go into operation, is giving rise to a good deal of earnest discussion. The ordinary course would have been to allow the decision of the Cabinet to become known in due time by its action, or rather its failure to act. The prompt announcement in this case has, no doubt, been permitted with a view to quieting the agitation which was being raised by the various Protestant bodies which are hostile to the measure. If no arguments these could possibly bring to bear could change the Government's decision, it was both wise and kind to let the fact be known at once, thus saving the bodies referred to from useless trouble, and both them and the Government from the irritation and pain of a refusal to comply with their wishes after they had been strongly expressed. In the intense indignation caused by so grave a misappropriation of the educational funds of the Province of Quebec, and by the still more humiliating and unpatriotic act of placing the disposal of the sum thus misappropriated in the hands of a foreign ecclesiastic, Protestants may too easily forget that the sole question for the Dominion Government to decide was whether the Bill was within the constitutional powers of the Province. That being admitted, an Ottawa veto would have been a constitutional wrong, and a source of danger to all the Provinces. With the merits or demerits of the question the Dominion Government had nothing further to do. This doctrine may not commend itself to those who favour centralization of authority. It may perhaps be easy to quote words and acts of the Ottawa Administration which are not in harmony with it. But past events have made it pretty clear that it is the only interpretation of the Constitution which will be accepted by the Protestant Provinces. If any one doubts this, let him but imagine the case of a Dominion veto of some Act, say of the Ontario Assembly, appropriating a large sum of the Province's own money for some educational or other purpose.

THE pending election in a Manitoba constituency presents a phase of the political situation in Canada to which we have often referred, and which demands the reprobation of every honest Canadian. It can hardly be doubted that the current of feeling in the Prairie Province sets at present somewhat strongly against the Dominion Government. Yet the constituency in question presents the anomaly of a candidate who professes to be a Liberal of long standing, and who strongly denounces the policy of the Ottawa Government in its treatment of Manitoba, seeking election as an "independent" supporter of that Government. The facts seem to admit of but one inference, but, as if to remove all doubt, the candidate, it is said, frankly explains that he takes this attitude because it will enable him the better to promote local interests. This again means that he believes that gratitude for expected favours will weigh more strongly with the electors than any questions of public policy or political conviction. Surely this is paying the people whose support is courted a most doubtful compliment. It should be an offence to both parties. Liberals should resent the imputation that their suffrages can be purchased by such a consideration. The political supporters of the Government should recognise and resent the insult to that Government implied in the assumption that its members are so unfaithful and dishonest in the discharge of the stewardship of the public funds with which they are intrusted that their appropriations can be affected by the support or opposition of a representative.

CANADA has no cause for regret that the entrance of Newfoundland into the Confederation has been still further delayed. The Dominion is thereby well out of the three-century-old fishery controversy with France, which threatens to be even harder of settlement than that with the United States. Newfoundland seems to have got the better in the bait question, for the present at least, though the French fishermen are said to have found other means of procuring this indispensable article. The dispute, which is now entering upon a specially disagreeable, almost acute stage, is now about the rights of the respective nations on "The French Shore." As our readers are aware, it was decided by the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, that the Island, whose ownership had been so long a bone of contention, should belong to England, but that France was to have reserved to her certain rights of curing and drying fish, etc., along the west and north coasts, known thenceforth as "The French Shore." The Newfoundlanders have

erected shops on the reserved coast, for carrying on the work of lobster preservation, occupying according to M. Goblet's statements in the French Chamber, about one-fifth of the whole shore. These shops, it is alleged, injuriously affect the French fishermen. M. Goblet loftily declared a few weeks since, in answer to an interpellation, that these lobster workshops "would be made to disappear." The question is evidently a thorny one. The French do not even claim, we suppose, to own any portion of the shore. Does the right of their fishermen to use it for the purpose specified, imply that the real owners must refrain for ever from occupying any portion of it? This is a matter which can be determined only by the two nations themselves, and the present state of feeling does not promise an immediate or amicable settlement. The Dominion is for the present happily free from the complication. It is not easy to see how she could have helped in the solution of the problem, though it would seem as if either the British Government, or our own, or both must have thought so.

THE deputation from the ports of the Clyde, Forth, Mersey, Tyne and Tees, which waited upon Lord Salisbury two or three weeks since to urge the necessity of better provision for local defence, has brought to the front the burning question of the defences of the United Kingdom. The *Times*, *Spectator*, and other influential journals are urging the subject upon the attention of the Government and the nation, and it seems pretty certain that a scheme for the appropriation of a large sum of money for improving the national defences will be one of the important measures submitted to Parliament at the approaching session. Whatever means may be proposed for the better protection of the different localities represented by the deputation—whose members, by the way, were very frank in pointing out that both the perfecting of plans and the finding of money were matters of national, not local concern—it is conceded on all hands that adequate provision for the safety of the commerce, coasts and ports of the Kingdom can be made only by equipping and maintaining a navy sufficiently powerful to meet and defeat any possible combination of the navies of other nations, while at the same time protecting the great lines of commerce, and the coaling stations and points of call, upon which the regular performance of their duties by the navy and the mercantile marine so greatly depends. "Until the navy is made strong enough to do this with absolute and indubitable certainty," says the *Times*, "we have done nothing." That this involves an immense additional outlay in various directions, if, indeed, it is within the limits of the possible, is obvious. No doubt the attempt will be seriously made. But if made, and if successful for the present, where is this thing going to end? That is the question which at once forces itself upon the thought. How long can the most sanguine hope that it will be within the range of possibility for the one nation to keep up a navy so vastly superior, not merely to that of any other single nation, but to the combined navies of all the nations which it is possible to conceive of as uniting against it? But that conundrum must, we suppose, be left as one of the legacies to coming generations. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Possibly the nations may some day learn to trust each other.

IN spite of its many abuses, the people of the United States seem determined to hold fast their faith in free speech. The atrocities perpetrated by the Anarchists a few years ago in Chicago are still fresh in the public memory. In view of the well-known fact that these foes of society are still active in propagating their obnoxious tenets in that city, it is no wonder their annual gathering was looked forward to with some alarm, especially as ominous whispers and threats were in the air. Under these circumstances the police authorities, believing that unlawful measures would be discussed and advised, and mischief perhaps result, took upon themselves arbitrarily to prohibit the meeting of the "Arbeiter Bund." An appeal to the courts resulted in a judgment fully vindicating the right of public meeting for all classes of citizens. In pronouncing the judgment, Judge Tuley spoke as follows: "I am astonished to find that, at this day, in this free country, it should be urged by affidavit and arguments in a court of justice that a police official can forbid the meeting of a society or public meeting because of his belief that the society is a treasonable one, and the members are about to commit treasonable acts. If this be law, then every political, literary, religious or other society would hold their constitutional right of free speech and peaceable assemblies at the mercy of every petty policeman—for the chief, in this respect, has

no more power than his lowest subaltern. In this civilized age, neither by the law of this State nor by the law of any other State or nation, making any pretence to freedom, are treasonable intentions or words, unaccompanied by overt deeds (or acts), made a punishable offence." The authorities of the State had already shown that that they know how to punish murderous deeds, and stamp out incipient anarchy. They now show that they are prepared to go to great lengths and run considerable risk in order to preserve the right of free assemblage and speech. Judge Tuley's declaration that no State, making any pretence to freedom, would make treasonable words a punishable offence is a pretty broad one. It would scarcely be approved, we judge, by some of our Canadian contemporaries. It seems late to shut the stable door after the steed is stolen, but Judge Tuley's principle is the only safe one.

PRESIDENT-ELECT HARRISON seems to have the rare merit of being able to keep his own counsel. After he has been subjected to innumerable interviews, has received tons of advice and persuasion, and has had cabinets constructed for him by the dozen, it is now openly admitted that no one, himself, it may be hoped, excepted, is any the wiser. No one knows who is to be the Secretary of State, or of the Interior, or of War, or of anything else in the forthcoming Administration. But the strain imposed upon the strength and patience of the incoming President must be terrible. The questions are, it is true, of great importance; how great depends largely upon the strength of will and the individuality of the President himself. It is easy to perceive that with a weak man, or even with a man not abnormally strong, in the Presidency, the fate of the nation may be almost in the hands of any Cabinet officer who may be able to gain the ascendancy over him. The fact that the members of the Administration are not responsible to the people, but are merely the servants and assistants of the President, though at first thought it may seem to render their positions of less importance, has really the opposite effect. In England or Canada an obnoxious Minister may be summarily ejected by the people. In the United States he is beyond their reach, and if he can but gain the President's ear, may be virtual ruler of the nation for four years.

IF any reliance can be placed upon the current accounts of events in Samoa, the relations between Germany and the United States must be rapidly assuming a threatening aspect. It must be remembered, of course, that the news comes mainly from American sources, and through American channels, but, after all reasonable allowances have been made for colouring and exaggeration, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the conduct of the German naval officers has been arrogant in the extreme. In fact, it seems hardly too much to say that arrogance is becoming characteristic of German officialdom in its intercourse with other nations, as witness the Bismarck-Morier affair and the course pursued in East Africa. In the case in question, however, it is hard to believe that the course of the commanders of the German ships at Samoa can meet the approval of the authorities at Berlin. Not even the Emperor or Bismarck can care to bring about a rupture with the United States, especially when, as seems probable, treaty obligations, and the interests of her own subjects would almost surely compel Great Britain to make common cause with the Great Republic. Meanwhile developments will be watched with interest and anxiety, not perhaps unmingled with curiosity to see whether the action of the Washington authorities will be as prompt and vigorous when a great European Power is concerned as it was in the case of the petty Republic of Hayti. If Canadians were like-minded with political fire-eaters of the Blair type, and disposed to approve their specific for re-uniting North and South, they might almost wish to see England and the United States engaged together in a great war. But we hope better things for the sake of human civilization and progress.

THE election of a single Deputy to fill a vacancy in one of the thirty-eight seats in the Department of the Seine should not ordinarily be an affair of great national importance. But just now it may almost be said that the fate of the Republic depends upon the result. Should General Boulanger be defeated, the Government and the friends of the present régime will breathe easier, for a time at least. Should General Boulanger be elected by the motley groups which have combined to support him, it is impossible to foretell the consequences of which the event may be regarded as prophetic. It is true that the redoubt-