

way be so brought out and focussed as to force the resignation of the Government, either through the people's representatives or otherwise, without establishing a precedent that would be sure to return in some way to plague its inventors. The action of Lieutenant-Governor Angers does not apply, seeing that thus far he has not acted without the advice of his Ministers, but has simply brought pressure to bear to force their hands, which the Governor-General has, of course, the right to do if he is able. Meanwhile it may be said with confidence that more of evil than of good would result from any course of action tending away from the responsible system so long fought for and so highly prized by Canadians. If there is not enough of political virtue left in the people of Canada to warrant the continued exercise of the power of self-government, that virtue cannot be created by any exercise of Imperial prerogative in opposition to a Government which still commands the support of a majority of the people's representatives.

WE are glad to see that the project of a local tri-union is once more attracting some attention in the Maritime Provinces, though the obstacles to be overcome, rooted mainly in sectional feeling or prejudice, have on former occasions proved themselves so great that there is now little room to hope for the success of any such movement. Still the benefits to be gained, in the saving of expense, the concentration of political and moral influence, and the increase of local dignity, are so obvious that it would surely be worth while for local patriots to renew the attempt. One of the most striking and by no means pleasing features of the Confederation as now constituted is the great disparity in the size and population of its component parts. This destroys in a measure the symmetry of the whole structure. It is true that hitherto, separated though it is into three distinct units, the sea-board section of the Dominion has managed not only to hold its own, but to secure a good deal more than its own share of influence at Ottawa. This fact, into the causes of which we do not now enquire, has no doubt tended to lessen the weight of the motives which would otherwise have impelled those Provinces to seek the strength which comes from union. But it is hardly probable that this preponderance of Maritime influence in the Cabinet can last. On the other hand could the three see their way clear to join hands and substitute a single Legislature and a single Lieutenant-Governor for the six Houses and the three Governors now maintained, the saving in expense alone would be no inconsiderable item. The example of Ontario should be sufficient guarantee of the sufficiency of a single House, for it cannot be doubted that Ontario is at least as well governed locally as any other Province. It is but too evident that the time is near when the financial question will have become a very serious one, and the readjustment demanded may even imperil the stability of the Confederation. Further, it is undeniable that in point of standing or dignity great gain would result from the course proposed. Membership in the new Assembly and office in the new Government would be something worth aspiring to and a better class of men would make their way to the front. If it be said, or thought, that the Maritime representatives both in the local Parliaments and at Ottawa already compare very favourably with those from the larger Provinces, we do not care to dispute the fact, which does not, however, prove that under better auspices a still better showing might not be made. This reminds us, by the way, of the superior sneer with which one of our Ontario representatives, on his return from the first session of the first Dominion Parliament, replied to one who asked him what kind of men were the members from the Maritime Provinces, "Parish politicians!" Whether the Western statesman's judgment was at fault, or the members from the seaside have proved apter students in the larger school, the fact that they almost from the first have had a preponderating influence in the Ottawa Cabinet, is undeniable. Hence when we venture to urge upon their attention the great gain that would result to themselves were they united in one large and influential Province, it is by no means implied that such union is as yet necessary to enable them to secure fair play at Ottawa.

THE unexpected frankness of Mr. Pacaud in the witness box has given the investigation now going on before the Quebec Commission quite a dramatic turn. In the coolness and apparent absence of regret or shame with which he gives his testimony, this witness reminds us of Murphy before the Committee on Privileges and Elections. In fluency and apparent straightforwardness, however, the

Frenchman thus far appears to have greatly the advantage of his Irish compeer. Whether this advantage is the result of a more reliable memory, or of greater truthfulness, can be better determined after the cross-questioning. His lucidity of style and the documentary evidence with which his narrative is accompanied, go far to convey the impression that he is telling the truth, at least so far as his own share in the transactions is concerned. And that share was a truly remarkable one. Here is a man with no official position whatever in the Government or in connection with it, who sways the Government at his will. His control of the Premier seems to have been even more absolute than that exercised over Sir Hector Langevin by Thomas McGreevy. And the fact is so well understood that contractors having or wishing to have access to Mr. Mercier on business with the Government, practically recognize the fact that it is useless to attempt to approach him save through this intermediary. Think, too, of the sublime assurance of this man when he refuses a paltry fee of \$75,000, and insists on one of \$100,000 for his services as a mere go-between in an alleged business transaction which could scarcely have consumed more than a few hours, or at most days, of his valuable time. But neither the power nor the rascality of Pacaud are matters of doubt. Nor are they, in themselves, of more than secondary importance. The main interest in his remarkable story centres around its connection with the Premier of Quebec and his Cabinet, though it is exceedingly unfortunate, to say the least, for Mr. Laurier, the Leader of the Dominion Opposition, that he should have made such a selection of his newspaper editor and confidential agent. But how about Mr. Mercier and his colleagues? The aim of the witness is, evidently, to save his leader at his own expense. Pacaud declares that neither Mr. Mercier nor the members of his Cabinet knew anything about his (Pacaud's) relations with Mr. Armstrong. But they could hardly have supposed the former so disinterested as to have taken so much trouble for the latter without fee or reward. Moreover, Mr. Mercier can hardly have been so ignorant of his friend's personal history and circumstances as not to have had cause for wonder, in the absence of knowledge, at his almost unlimited command of money. As a matter of fact, Mr. Langelier is already so implicated by his acceptance of a part of the booty that no way of escape is apparent, and he will, there is little doubt, follow the example of Sir Hector Langevin and resign. As to Mr. Mercier himself the impartial onlooker will feel constrained to conclude, just as in the case of Sir Hector, that the theory that he was without knowledge, or a suspicion so strong as to be practically equivalent to a guilty knowledge of the fact, is inconceivable and so, inadmissible. In any case it is evident that the Provincial Treasury, under his supervision, was robbed of at least \$100,000 in this particular transaction, which should have been saved by the vigilance of the Premier and his Ministers, and no plea of myopia or imbecility can avail to free them from responsibility for such a loss to the public revenues, especially a loss which accrued in equivalent gain to themselves, personally or politically.

A DISTINGUISHED jurist is said to have once given to a friend who, with little knowledge of law, was about to be promoted to a position involving the pronouncing of judicial decisions, and who was nervous in consequence, the following advice: "Give your decisions with confidence, for they will generally be right, but avoid giving reasons for them, for those will be pretty sure to be wrong." One is reminded of the anecdote by the article which recently appeared in one of the organs of the Government in reference to Mr. Chapleau and his ambitions. To adduce the fact that a Cabinet Minister has failed in the management of a certain Department in so far that gross abuses have arisen in it and prevailed for a length of time as a reason why the Minister in question should not be permitted to leave that Department, sounds very like a Hibernicism in logic, while the implied conclusion that said Minister is not fit to be put in charge of another portfolio, carrying with it much larger responsibilities and temptations, is radically sound. Of this, however, we may be sure. The people of Canada, at least that great majority of them who are disposed to demand proved ability and integrity as indispensable qualifications for a seat on the Government benches, have drawn a sigh of relief at the intimation that Hon. Mr. Chapleau is not to be put at the head of the Department of Public Works. All other considerations aside, the very fact that a politician not only demands such a position because of its pat-

ronage, but intrigues and fights for it, affords, as we have before said, the most conclusive proof that he ought not to have it. Such self-seeking, to call it by no worse name, is not a mark of the true statesman. Even from the purely party point of view—though we gladly credit him with higher motives—the Premier's decision is a wise one. It does not yet appear how much harm the disappointed Secretary of State may be able to work the Government, should he be so ill-advised as to attempt to do it harm, but Mr. Abbott may be very sure that the injury will be, at the worst, far less than that which would have resulted from giving way to the peremptory demands of Mr. Chapleau and his friends. Of course we do not know how well founded is the rumour about the written pledge said to have been given after the death of Sir John Macdonald, but it may be assumed that subsequent revelations in connection with the Printing Bureau give moral absolution for the failure to keep any such promise. We are glad to believe that Mr. Abbott is thoroughly persuaded that the only hope for the continuance and success of his administration is in so thorough and wise a reorganization of his Cabinet as will fill it with men of character and ability such as will command the confidence of the country at this crisis of its history.

MR. BALFOUR is well maintaining his reputation as a fighting Minister, in his new position as Leader of the Government forces in the British Commons. His fierce attack upon Mr. Gladstone's "musical variety show," at Newcastle, and his keen ridicule of Sir William Harcourt's belligerent attitude towards the House of Lords, are quite in keeping with his record as Irish Secretary. But the most significant utterance of the new First Lord of the Treasury, and that which is likely to attract most attention, is his praise of opportunism, as a guiding principle in statesmanship. This avowal of his political creed will, we fancy, be a surprise to many, possibly a disappointment to some. Everything, of course, depends upon what is meant by opportunism, and to what extent it is so construed as to be not inconsistent with definite aims and fixed principles. If it consists simply in watching for opportunities to catch opponents bathing and make off with their clothes, it may certainly be, as it has often been, successful, but that seems hardly the kind of policy a Government leader would care to avow. Mr. Balfour repeated the statement which has often been made by members of his party, that vastly more sound, sober legislation can be placed to the credit of the Conservatives than to that of the Liberals, during the past half century. This is probably true, if the credit is to be given solely to the party which was in power at the time the measures were put on the statute book, and to the Government which framed those measures and carried them through Parliament. But if the genesis of those measures, or of the principles they embody, were enquired into, it is doubtful if Mr. Balfour could maintain his boast. It will be found that in almost every case the legislation in question is but the adoption or adaptation of propositions which emanated from the opposite party. Instances in point will at once suggest themselves to the reader. We refer to the fact to point out the weakness of opportunism as a Government policy. It has in reality to take its cue from an aggressive Opposition. Its usefulness depends upon the originality, courage and activity of political opponents. Apart from the work of such opponents opportunism as a policy would be impossible. And this, by the way, affords one of the best arguments in favour of the party system. The tendency of all Governments, bearing the responsibilities of office and enjoying its emoluments, is to be conservative, cautious. The necessity of the Opposition is to be active, progressive and aggressive. The latter supplies the propelling force, the former holds the lever and applies the brakes. The outcome of the two is often sound legislation. But this does not prove that there is not a more excellent way.

ANNEXATION is unnecessary, is undesirable and is impossible." To ninety-nine out of every one hundred readers of THE WEEK the above quotation from a recent effusion of Mr. Wiman's, reprinted from the Brooklyn Eagle, will seem so much a truism that they will perhaps wonder that we should deem it worth while to repeat it. Yet it is well that Mr. Wiman, whose utterances no doubt command a good deal of attention in the United States, or at least in the vicinity of New York, should have been moved to dispel the illusions which Mr. Glen, a former member of the Canadian Parliament, albeit a citizen of the United States by birth and sentiment, has been