

suspect, that there is at bottom a lack of solidarity in the Cabinet, and but a divided loyalty to its head among the rank and file of its supporters, it becomes exceedingly doubtful whether the harmony essential to strength can be restored under any leader at present available. The chances are rather in favour of increased division, with defeat in the near future as its outcome.

The Intercolonial Conference has come and gone. If its deliberations have failed in some measure to attract the attention anticipated, the fact can no doubt be accounted for by the secrecy in which the delegates saw fit to enshroud their discussions. If the hope expressed by Sir John Thompson in the Commons should be speedily realized and the proceedings given to the public in some tolerably satisfactory form, it is possible that popular interest and enthusiasm may yet be in some measure evoked. The action taken with reference to the Pacific cable, which is about the only result of the Conference which is as yet definitely known, seems eminently wise and reasonable. It involves no little delay, but in matters of such weight it is the part of statesmanship to make haste slowly. To have attempted anything more definite in the absence of knowledge of the topography of the ocean bed on which the cable must be laid would have been reckless shooting in the dark. There can be little doubt that the British Government will promptly accede to the request of the Conference to conduct the required survey, on the condition named, viz., the payment of two-thirds of the expense by the colonies. As to the trade question we are still in the dark, but it is pretty safe to say that the chief, possibly the fatal, obstacle to any preferential arrangement will be found in the requirements of those members of the Empire which have committed themselves to a protective policy. It is in the highest degree unlikely that anything has been advanced, or can be advanced, which will cause the Mother Country to falter for a moment in her resolute adherence to free-trade principles, or to so much as consider any proposal looking to the imposition of a discriminatory tax upon the products of those countries which supply her with by many times the greater quantity of her food and raw materials. It is possible, however, though scarcely likely, that her treaties with other nations can be so modified as to enable her to give the colonies the right to discriminate in each other's favour. But any such preferential arrangement, with the Mother Country left out, will fail of its main purpose.

When a motion is made in the Commons to censure the Canadian Government for alleged breach of faith in having failed to fulfil the engagements into which it had entered with the British Government for enforcing a system of quarantine against the cattle of the United States entering Canada, or passing through it by rail, an unsophisticated onlooker would suppose that the main question to be discussed was that of fact. Either the charge is true in substance or it is not. If it can be shown to be true that our Government has serious-

ly and continuously failed to fulfil its engagement in the matter with reasonable strictness, no one can deny that it is deserving of censure, not only for having damaged the reputation of the country for honest dealing, but for having jeopardized a most important and profitable trade. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that the agreement with the British Government has been fulfilled in the spirit, if not in every jot and tittle of detail, the accusation can but recoil on the heads of the member making it and of his party. Opinions will differ, we suppose, as to Mr. Mulock's success in proving the strong charges of negligence and bad faith which he formulated in the Commons, the other day. It is not necessary for us to express an opinion upon that point. The fact that some of his specifications went back to a period eight or ten years ago certainly give the attack the appearance of being somewhat far-fetched. But, clearly, the logical and effective thing for the Government to do was to emphatically deny the alleged facts and proceed to minimize or refute them by counter proofs. To attempt to confuse the issue by raising the cry of disloyalty strengthens the very accusation which it deprecates. We confess that we have no patience with the attempt to muzzle opponents by crying out that their charges are disloyal, and calculated to do harm abroad. A Government should be always ready to challenge the strictest investigation. If it can show, in a case like the present, that it has lived strictly up to the spirit of its engagements, the discussion will do the country a service rather than an injury and the Government should be rather glad of the opportunity.

The tremendous strike now in progress in the United States is scarcely to be distinguished from civil war in its effect upon the internal commerce of the country, or that large part of it specially affected, while there is the possibility, so long as it is continued, that it may at any moment develop into actual civil war. This great calamity, however it may terminate, following so closely upon the heels of a previous strike of disastrous dimensions, must impress upon the minds of all who have to do in any way with public or business affairs, the necessity of finding and adopting some means to prevent a recurrence of such struggles. The fact that both strikes, as most other great strikes in these days, are directed specially against the railroads, is easily understood. As Mr. Stead has put it, the railways are the Achilles heel, through which the whole industrial system of the country is, under present conditions, made vulnerable. In the interests of labour itself it is greatly to be deplored that the striking labourers, or at least a large contingent of their sympathizers, show themselves so incapable of self-control. Whatever justification there may in any case be for their refusing to work, the moment they

commence to do injury to the persons or property of their antagonists, or to use violence of any kind to prevent the managers from supplying their places, that moment they put themselves in the wrong. They have, thereafter, no reasonable ground of complaint if the civil or military authorities come to the aid of their opponents, and sternly enforce the laws of the land for the protection of the property and persons of the capitalists. In this position the strikers in Chicago have already placed themselves. The result can only be that sooner or later, very likely before this paragraph is printed, either the state or the national authorities will be compelled to take stern measures to enforce the observance of law and order. In such a struggle the strikers are sure to get the worst of it, in addition to losing the sympathy of the great masses of law-abiding citizens, who really make the public sentiment.

But how to deal with the matter so as to prevent the recurrence of these great struggles, in which there is no discrimination between the innocent and the guilty, the delay compelled or the property destroyed being just as likely to inflict ruinous loss upon the best friends of the strikers as upon those whom they regard as their enemies, and yet do no injustice to either employer or employee, or the patient public—that is the great industrial problem of the age. Certainly the solution is not so simple a matter as many of the newspapers of the United States, especially the religious newspapers, seem to think. These teem with articles the purport of which is something like this: "The employees of the railroad should be compelled to perform the work which they engage to do when they accept the employment and wages of the companies, until such time as they may choose to quit, after giving fair and reasonable notice. The length of notice required may either be determined by contract made with the companies at the time of engagement, or be fixed by law. It is intolerable that not only the great business concerns of this nation, but the property, the health and even the lives of many citizens, should be destroyed or put in jeopardy, whenever a few employees of some private company fall out with their employers on a question of wages." All this is reasonable and right so far as it goes. But it is marvellous that so many of those who put it forth with confidence, fail to see that, as a matter of equity, it touches but one side of a great question.

Let it be granted by all means that under such circumstances as exist in a large part of the United States at the present moment, the first duty of the authorities is to protect property, to restrain violence, and to punish lawlessness, at any cost. That is what laws and governments are for. But when this is done, let it be recognized that