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editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to
any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

CONTRARY to general expectation the work of reconstructing the Dominion Cabinet, about which so much has been heard during the last few months, has been completed in advance of the meeting of Parliament, which it is now understood is to take place towards the end of February. The final act of readjustment has to some extent met the reasonable criticism based upon the strange lack of Ontario representation in the Government. The appointment of Mr. J. C. Patterson gives this Province whatever of justice or advantage is to be derived from having an Ontario man of high character and good abilities in the Privy Council, albeit in the somewhat unimportant position—Mr. Chapleau being judge—of Secretary of State. Mr. Patterson is of course new to the responsibilities of Ministerial life and has yet to prove the wisdom of Premier Abbott's choice, but there is good reason to expect that he will speedily develop the qualities requisite in an able and honest Minister. Of the other changes made there is less to be said. There is certainly some force in the objection that the elevation of the Minister under whose administration the extraordinary abuses in the printing bureau took place, to the headship of the still more important department of the Customs is hardly the best way in which to reassure the people that an era of reform has been entered upon. That Mr. Bowell would make a capable and efficient Minister of Militia no one will doubt, even were the duties of that office much more onerous than they happily are, or are likely to be. But the transfer of the Minister whose management of that department during the past years has given rise to so much dissatisfaction, to the much more onerous position of Postmaster-General, can scarcely fail to be a source of weakness rather than of strength to the Government. On the whole it is probable that Premier Abbott has done about as well as could have been done under the circumstances. The fact that the reconstructed Cabinet falls so far short of the ideal Government affords a fresh illustration of the disadvantages of the party system.

TWO things have occurred since we last commented upon the political situation in Quebec, each of which has an important and powerful bearing upon the result of the coming struggle. These are, respectively, the revelations before the Royal Commission and the pronouncement by Mr. Laurier. With regard to the first, it can only be said that the evidence that the Province has been shamefully robbed and the proceeds of the robbery devoted to party purposes is clear and astounding. The fact that a goodly portion of the spoil was deposited to the credit of Mr. Mercier himself, and drawn out by means of cheques endorsed with his signature, is too damning in its conclusiveness to be explained away by any number of affidavits to the effect that he had no personal cognizance of the transaction. The device of shutting one's eyes while a gross crime is being committed for one's profit is too transparent to serve in a court of justice, or to deceive anyone who does not wish to be deceived. We always felt that there was room for a certain degree of doubt in regard to Mr. Mercier's personal complicity in the Baie de Chaleurs iniquity, and that pending the final report of the first Commission he might with some show of justice claim the benefit of the doubt. We have also felt that the personnel of the second Commission, composed as it is wholly of political opponents of the accused parties, had an element of the unjust and the suspicious, which should have been avoided. But no accumulation of mistakes or wrongs on the part of political opponents can do away with established facts or offset political and moral crimes. With regard to the attitude of the Liberal leader we do not know that much fault can be found, at least by partisans. While refusing to excuse or condone Mr. Mercier's offence, and declaring in effect that he must be cast aside, he, as was to be expected of a party leader, denounces the dismissal of the Ministry by the Lieut.-Governor, his replacing of them with a purely Conservative Cabinet despite the Liberal majority in the House, and his dissolution of the Legislature, all on his own personal authority, as violations of the letter and spirit of the constitution. Hence he advises the people of Quebec first to vindicate their constitutional liberties and then to punish the dishonest Ministers and replace them with better men. Whether this is the best advice or not, there can be no reasonable doubt that it is that which would have been given by a leader of the other party in similar circumstances. In view of all the difficulties it seems to be more and more a matter for regret that Mr. Angers should have failed to take the course plainly marked out by the spirit of the constitution, as interpreted by usage. Had he summoned the Legislature, appointed an impartial commission, and caused the overwhelming proofs of dishonest administration to be laid before the House, it is inconceivable that there could have been any hesitation on the part of the majority to pronounce just judgment. But had the party spirit proved too strong and a disposition been shown to condone the rank offences, then would have been the time for an exercise of the prerogative which could not have failed to command the approval of all good citizens, irrespective of party. As the matter now stands the issue is so complicated that thousands of citizens who may honestly wish to support the right will find themselves in a dilemma which should not have been forced upon them.

THE address of Col. Davidson, the retiring President of the Toronto Board of Trade, on the occasion of the installation of his successor, is an able and important document, and one which every intelligent citizen would do well to study. There is much force in Col. Davidson's claim that the Board of Trade should play an important and influential part in the management of civic affairs, though recent events may perhaps be understood to emphasize the necessity of its doing this in conjunction with other organizations representing the various business and industrial interests of the city. The time has evidently come when all good citizens, and especially those who are most intelligent, and those who best understand the management of business affairs, should give much more study and attention than they have hitherto done to questions of civic and municipal administration, and Col. Davidson did well to urge the matter afresh upon the attention of the

members of this Board, which is coming to occupy so influential a position in relation to all matters affecting the public weal. Referring to particulars, probably the most important part of his address was that referring to the reclamation of the marshy tract known as Ashbridge's Bay, which covers an area of more than a thousand acres, now the property of the city. The question he asks is one which suggests its own answer so obviously that we cannot do better than repeat it in his own words:—

Why hand this property over to any man or company of men to improve it, and enjoy the rents of it for forty or fifty years, or an indefinite period, when the city itself may undertake the work, carry it on gradually and economically according to plans framed in the public interest, make our harbour the largest and safest on the lakes, and dispose of the reclaimed lands for parks and private dwellings, as well as for the seat of factories, warehouses and smelting works—the source of a perennial revenue for the city treasury?

There are of course many who will answer with the general statement that no corporation can ever do any large work of the kind so economically, or so satisfactorily as a private company. To this we fancy Col. Davidson would answer that, if true, that may be a very good reason for reforming and perfecting the methods of the corporation, rather than for a confession of incorrigible corruption or imbecility in the management of civic affairs. Whether he would be prepared to follow his recommendation in this particular case to its logical consequences as applied to other matters we do not know. That he is no pessimist so far as the future of Canada is concerned is abundantly clear from his further remarks touching the agricultural industry, the nickel ores, and the prospects of trade intercourse with the Mother Country.

THE enforced resignation by Professor Workman of the chair of instruction which he has for several years occupied in Victoria University introduces into the arena of theological discussion in Canada a vexed question. It is a question of no little difficulty, and of much moment, by reason of the important principles involved and the far-reaching results to which a general decision in one way or the other would lead. One might, at first thought, be disposed to say that it is a matter between those entrusted with the management of the University and the Professor, with which the public has no proper concern. But this can hardly be maintained. Every educational institution, by reason not only of its public charter, but of its relations to the people to whom it appeals for patronage and support, is in an important sense amenable to public opinion in respect to its management, the character of its instruction and discipline, etc. The gist of the question involved is really, as we understand it, what is the relation of the responsible managers to the theoretical aspects of the instruction given? In the present case the point at issue is a purely theological one. It is a question of Scripture interpretation. The fundamental problem may be stated somewhat as follows: Upon whom rests the responsibility of determining what views shall be presented, what theories adopted, touching points in regard to which the most learned doctors differ? Two modes of procedure are conceivable. The responsible managers, who are not themselves teachers and not necessarily students of the subjects taught, much less authorities on points of difference, may satisfy themselves with selecting men in whose characters, learning and abilities they have full confidence and leave these men free to propound such systems and advocate such theories as may commend themselves to their own minds as the result of the best investigation they may be able to make. Or the managers may feel it to be their duty first to decide just what is truth in all important matters in dispute among the learned, and then take care to engage and retain as teachers and professors only such men as may have reached the same conclusions, or are at least willing to adopt and advocate those conclusions. Stated in this way, it will be seen that the principle involved is by no means confined to theological matters. It is capable of wide, almost universal, application. There are broad and even fundamental differences of view in regard to truth in science, in philosophy, even in literature. One truth may be of greater relative importance than another by reason of its more direct bearing upon