

One of the first duties of government is to afford that protection. The government of the United States has been emphatically termed a government of laws and not of men. It will certainly cease to deserve this high appellation if the laws furnish no remedy for the violation of a vested legal right."

In the United States, however, it has been objected that the provisions under which legislation which interferes with contractual rights are somewhat inelastic. I would suggest that in our constitution something of this kind should be inserted,

"Neither the Parliament of Canada nor the Legislature of any Province shall pass any *ex post facto* legislation, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or law taking private property for public use, without due compensation in law."

which I do not believe any one would object to. In my view the United States would have been split into fragments ere this but for this constitutional sheet anchor of safety. Any statesmen who will put through such an amendment to the British North America Act will, in my opinion, deserve a high place in the history of the country. If in the future a Federal Parliament is likely to be established in the Mother Country, some such provision will be absolutely necessary there for the protection of property and the rights of the individual as against the selfishness of the many. You will observe that I have not suggested that bargains which experience has taught are inadvisable cannot be got rid of, but they should only be got rid of upon a just compensation.

In order to prevent any misapprehension I desire to say here that these observations are not inspired by any consideration or thought of Ontario legislation relating to what is known as Hydro-Electric matters. The controversy relating to that seemed to be settled by the answer made by the Whitney Government to the application for disallowance. The thought has been inspired by what has recently happened in the West in relation to the Great Waterways Railway. When President Castro, of Venezuela, repudiated the bargain which the Government of Venezuela had made with the Orinoco Steamship Company, a New Jersey corporation, he thought to avoid adverse comment by submitting the claim of the Company to damages to an arbitration tribunal practically nominated by the Government. This tribunal gave a small award. The United States Government pressed the claim and disputed the award, and the matter was referred to the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague, which has just rendered its decision reversing the whole proceedings. In the meantime, the credit of Venezuela has been enormously hurt by such action. I