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IT is not easy to understand how any one familiar with Canadian constitutional usage and attached to its representative system of government could have been surprised by the reply of His Excellency the Governor-General to the deputation which waited on him on Friday last with the petitions for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act. The action of the representatives of the Equal Rights Association in asking, and of the Governor-General in receiving such a deputation, was in itself, as His Excellency intimated, a somewhat dangerous innovation, such as nothing short of a most serious crisis could justify. We have but to suppose Lord Stanley to have yielded to the wishes of the deputation by granting the prayer of the petition, in order to get a conception of the mischievous results that would almost surely have followed. Either we should then have had the spectacle of the Government stultifying itself and pouring contempt upon the people's representatives by doing that which it had already declared, with the almost unanimous approval of Parliament, could not rightfully be done, or we should have been face to face with the still more objectionable fact of the usurpation by the Governor-General of a power of acting independently of, or in opposition to, his constitutional advisers, which was long since surrendered by the British Government on the earnest and persistent demand of Canada. In the one case the Government, having set itself in opposition to the clearly expressed views of a very great majority of the Members of the Commons, would most surely have been defeated on the re-assembling of Parliament. In the other, the Governor-General must as surely have received the prompt resignation of the members of his Cabinet. In either event a dissolution of Parliament and an electoral contest, fought either on the lines of religious and race antipathies, or on those of a renewed struggle for self-government, or of both commingled, would have been inevitable. Whatever the issue, nothing worse for the Confederation, in its present state of "unstable equilibrium," could be imagined.

THE delegates of the Equal Rights Association would no doubt admit that their course in seeking a personal interview with the representative of royalty was a very unusual one, and that the action they desired him to take would have involved, to say the least, a serious stretch of His Excellency's prerogative. But they would maintain that their course was justifiable on the ground of extraordinary necessity. What, then, was that necessity? Were the petitioners in any way shut out from the ordinary and regular methods of bringing their influence to bear upon the responsible Executive? The peculiarity of the case is that the action they desired the Governor-General to take would be diametrically opposed, not only to the views of the Government, but to those of an overwhelming majority of their own representatives in the House of Commons. Now, it seems self-evident that the only condition on which they could reasonably hope to prevail upon the Queen's Representative to act in opposition to his own constitutionally chosen advisers, and to the almost unanimous resolution of Parliament, must be the condition of being able to furnish satisfactory proof that both Government and Parliament had forfeited the confidence of the majority of the people of the whole Dominion. How far the deputation, bearing petitions signed by less than 60,000 electors, fell short of doing this, must be obvious to any dispassionate observer, as it evidently was to Lord Stanley. When we add to this the reflection that in no single instance, so far as we can remember—certainly in very few instances—have the electors of a constituency distinctly censured their representative for refusing to support the motion in favour of disallowance, or repudiated his action, the wonder grows that the learned and able gentlemen composing the deputation, or the appointing boards, could have for a moment persuaded themselves that they had a case. Had any considerable majority of the people even of Ontario, to say nothing of all the other Provinces, really and heartily shared the opinions of the members of the Equal Rights Association, they would most surely have brought their indignation to bear upon their recreant representatives, and have demanded prompt recantation or resignation. Such action would have been strictly within their right, and, if followed up to any large extent, would have brought to bear such a pressure as no Government could long withstand.

WERE it quite respectful to suspect the Governor-General of being a humorist in disguise, and of giving way on so serious an occasion to his propensity, we could easily fancy His Excellency smiling in his sleeve as he reminded the deputation at the commencement of his reply that he must guard against drifting into "what might be construed as argument," and assured them at the close that he had endeavoured to avoid argument. We can imagine the members of the deputation at the after-meeting wondering what Lord Stanley regards as argument. Most persons would, we think, but for his caveat, have been liable to mistake his reply for an admirably clear and concise presentation of the whole argument against disallowance. At the same time it is easy to see that in no other way could he have done so well what he proposed and desired to do, viz., let the deputation know the aspect in which the case had presented itself to his mind. It was not his fault that the simple statement constitutes the most forcible argument. That statement, brief as it is, sums up the chief points which have always seemed to us to make the position of the Government and Commons in the matter absolutely impregnable. The property lying idle, the inability of the Government to sell it, the two sets of claimants, the Pope as the only arbiter acceptable to both, the fact that his approval, of which so much has been made, related not to the action of the Legislature, but to the division of the funds, the usage of Governments in the recognition of moral claims, the lack of evidence to show that "in this Dominion and in this nineteenth century the Jesuits have been less law-abiding or less loyal citizens than others, the legal status of the Society in Quebec as settled by the Act of Incorporation"—these links make up a chain of argument which might well make it impossible for Lord Stanley to doubt as to the duty imposed upon him by constitutional usage. It may be easy for the gentlemen composing the deputation to persuade themselves that these arguments have already been thoroughly refuted, but the fact that, after so energetic and systematic an effort, the petition received the signatures of so small a percentage of the electors shows pretty conclusively that the great body of the people do not share their opinion.

RECENT advices from Manitoba are to the effect that the Local Government has either decided to take the initiative in a movement for the abolition of both the dual language and the dual school system in that Province, or is at least seriously contemplating such a movement. In what manner it is proposed to set about the proposed reform has not been stated, but we suppose there is but one constitutional process. The appeal must no doubt be in the first instance to the Dominion Government and Parliament, and through them to those of Great Britain, without whose permission the requisite change in the B. N. A. Act cannot be effected. It may be indeed barely possible, in view of the great difficulty and expense of keeping up the duplicate systems in Manitoba, and the small number of those who can profit by them that the official use of the French language, and even the grants in aid of Separate Schools might be quietly dropped by general consent. If so it is inconceivable that the Dominion authorities would attempt coercion. But such a contingency is perhaps too improbable even for speculation. It is tolerably certain, that in the case at least of the Separate Schools, every constitutional means of resistance would be brought to bear. That would be indeed but natural. There is little doubt, however, that the Local Government would be sustained by an overwhelming majority in seeking to relieve the young Province from an incubus, which presses so heavily on its resources, and which seems so uncalled for under existing circumstances. In this struggle the sympathies of all the Provinces except Quebec would be with them. The great conflict would have to be fought on the floor of the Commons, but the result could hardly be in doubt. The principle involved would be quite different from that underlying the agitation for the repeal of the Jesuits' Estates Act, or even that for revision of the Dominion constitution, should such a crusade be entered upon. The question at issue would simply affect the right of a Province to regulate a matter of purely local concern, or to bring about a change in the Constitution, affecting not another province, but simply itself. The only right of a minority which would be affected would be its dubious right to special privileges, not accorded to the rest of the population.

MANITOBA seems resolved to take the lead of the Provinces in radicalism. The proposed abolition of Separate Schools and the use of the French language might have been supposed sufficient reform work for a single session. But, according to the *Sun*, the work of renovation is not to be allowed to cease with the passage of these bold measures. The Governmental programme also embraces, according to this journal, a revolution in the educational system, and another in the judicial. The Board of Education is, it is said, to be abolished and a Minister of Education appointed, and juries are to be abolished in civil cases. Something may be said, though we doubt if valid arguments can be adduced, in favour of the second change. The first would be, we think, a serious mistake. Why should the young prairie Province follow Ontario's doubtful example and bring its schools within the arena of party control and conflict? The head of the Educational Department should be above all things a scholar and an educator, but why should he be a party politician? We do not think the experience of Ontario would be quoted by any impartial critic in favour of the change.

THERE is some reason to hope that the organization of the Toronto Citizens' Esplanade Improvement Association is the beginning of a new era in the management of the affairs of this great and growing city. A more fitting or pressing occasion could not have been found for the commencement of an organized effort to impress upon citizens the necessity for prompt and vigorous personal action if they would make the city worthy of the great future which lies before it. To rescue the lake front from the foul and disgraceful state in which years of neglect and