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THE manner in which religion is being mixed with politics, or rather made subservient to politics, in the Province of Quebec, must be rather painful to all members of the Roman Catholic Church, who dislike to see religious sentiments used for party ends. It has of late become common for the rival political leaders to vie with each other, even on the public platform, in their efforts to persuade the people that they respectively have special ecclesiastical favour and sanction. Premier Mercier has clearly outdone all his predecessors and opponents in the skill and astuteness with which he has availed himself of this potent means of influencing the judgment, if such we may call the faculty which surrenders itself to be passively swayed by the wish of priest and bishop, of the *habitant*. We have, as our readers know, never been able to see any serious danger to the constitution, or any outrage of any sentiment, save perhaps that of good taste, in the introduction of the name of the Pope in the preamble of the memorable Jesuits' Estates Act. The sanction of the Head of the Church, as the only one with authority to bind it even in a business transaction, has always seemed to us a necessary condition of the settlement effected by that Act. But when the Premier of a Province takes advantage of the influence gained both at Rome and with the local clergy by means of this and other legislative favours, and does not hesitate to parade, on all occasions, the favour of the ecclesiastical authorities, as his unanswerable claim for political support, it is difficult

for disinterested onlookers to retain the measure of respect they would like to feel for his position and acknowledged abilities. It is not easy to quell the rising suspicion that the wily Premier is chuckling in his sleeve while he is thus playing upon the religious susceptibilities of the masses and beating his opponents at their own game. The singular transaction with the Vatican, which made him the other day the intermediary in conferring the Grand Cross of St. Gregory upon Lieut-Governor Angers, from whom he holds his own commission as Premier, was probably unique in some of its features. A Quebec paper describes the event as pleasing because it united the religious and civil elements in a common sentiment. But if the honour be a purely ecclesiastical one—and coming from the Vatican it can properly be no other—there is surely a strange incongruity in its being bestowed at the solicitation and by the hand of a political leader, rather than a prelate. Politics are evidently at a strange pass in the sister Province.

AFTER the paragraph touching Gen. Middleton in last issue had gone to the printer, the General's "Parting Address to the People of Canada" appeared. We have more than once expressed our regret that Gen. Middleton had not seen fit to make some such personal statement; we now regret that this statement was not made long ago. Though the address is by no means satisfactory as a defence in the Bremner affair, the distinct and emphatic denial of the other charges which were preferred against him, but not investigated by the Parliamentary committee, must be accepted as such. Gen. Middleton says:

Mr. Lister's last three charges were struck out by the committee on the ground that there had been no authority given to investigate them, but, as they had been formally preferred, received and printed by the committee, I was surely entitled to a verdict on them, and on the general charge of plundering and licensing plundering, which they were brought forward to support.

The committee could not go beyond its powers to render a verdict on charges which were not in the reference, and on which it was, consequently, not empowered to take evidence. The initiative, it seems to us, should have been taken by the General himself. Had he demanded that the investigation be extended to those charges, his wishes could not have been disregarded. Had he given before the committee the explicit denial of their truthfulness which he now gives, the fact could not have failed to have great weight with the Government, Parliament and the public. In another respect, too, Sir Fred.'s logic seems to be at fault. So long as he does not deny having given the order for the appropriation of the furs in question, the fact that the parcel put up for him did not reach him, does not change the character of the original order. Enough, however, has been said on such points. Gen. Middleton's parting words go far to palliate though they cannot excuse his offence. When Ministers of the Crown were telegraphing the General commanding, in terms which it was, to say the least, easy to misunderstand as Gen. Middleton misunderstood them, to bring them mementoes of the conflict, it was the less to be wondered at that the General should think himself personally at liberty to secure a share. The greater wonder is that, in the case in question, any Minister of the Crown could have wished for a memento of an insurrection which was itself so obviously the result of Ministerial neglect and mismanagement. We should have supposed that every member of the Cabinet would have been anxious to forget the affair at the earliest possible moment.

WHETHER dictated by a spirit of mischief or of malice, Gen. Middleton's explanation of the causes which led to his receiving a monopoly of the honours of the North-West campaign is a veritable Parthian arrow directed at the Government. That all the officers who distinguished themselves in the campaign should be deprived of the accustomed recognition of their services because two of French extraction could not be placed on the list indicates a state of affairs at headquarters which is suggestive, if not ominous, of future trouble. We have always been inclined to think that the custom of bestowing such honours would have been better honoured in the breach than in the observance after a campaign in which the triumph

was won over fellow-citizens in insurrection. But where the precedent was set in the case of the commander, the refusal to follow it in regard to his subordinates had certainly an invidious look, and could not fail to give rise to serious reflections upon his own conduct and character. It is hard to read Gen. Middleton's tardy explanation without feeling that he would have occupied a more enviable position had he declined for himself the honours and emoluments which could not be shared with equally deserving members of his staff. To what extent this revelation of a bit of rebellion history will stir up afresh the smouldering fires of racial jealousy, or recoil upon the Minister of Militia and other members of the Cabinet, remains to be seen.

SOME of the efforts made by the newspapers to enliven party journalism during the dull season are rather amusing. In the first place we have a series of conjectures and well "hedged" prophecies in regard to the absorbing question whether we shall have a dissolution of Parliament before the expiration of the full period of its constitutional life. Into this business of guessing the Government organs do not of course enter. The sage conclusion reached, so far as we are able to understand it, is that if the present Parliament is dissolved before the end of its full period we shall have a general election at an earlier date than that at which it would otherwise have taken place; but if, on the other hand, the present Parliament is not prematurely dissolved the electors will not be appealed to until its full term has expired. Another and equally safe reading of the signs is that if Sir John A. Macdonald and his colleagues conclude that an earlier date than that of the end of the constitutional life of Parliament would be, in all probability more opportune and promising for their party, we shall have the earlier dissolution; but if, on the other hand, they are convinced that it will be in the interests of the party to postpone the general election as long as possible, that election will not take place until the latest date allowed by the Constitution. To which of the two views they are now inclined they themselves alone, and very likely not even they themselves, know. Probably the question is still undecided, and Sir John is still watching with eagle eye the signs of the times, or awaiting with confident coolness the turn of events.

ARISING out of the foregoing conjectures, a remarkable discussion has been going on between the *Empire* and the *Globe*, the organs of the Government and the Opposition respectively. The question raised is that of the personal responsibility of His Excellency, the Governor-General, in case the Government should advise him to dissolve the House a year or two in advance of its full period. Is he bound to act on the advice of his Ministers, irrespective of his own view of the reasons on which that advice may be based, or would it be his duty, on receiving such advice, to exercise his own judgment and grant or refuse the request for a dissolution on his own personal responsibility? Strangely enough we have the *Globe*, the organ of the Liberal Party, taking the latter position. His Excellency's plain duty would be, it argues, to fall back on the royal prerogative, and refuse to grant a dissolution unless convinced in his own mind of its necessity or utility. On the other hand, the organ of so-called Toryism defends the sound Liberal doctrine that in this, as in all other matters, the Governor-General is bound to follow the advice of his constitutional advisers, irrespective of his own opinions in the matter, so long, at least, as those advisers have evidently the support of a majority of the people's representatives. Surely this is the sounder constitutional view. The day of prerogative is past. The will of the people is the supreme law, and that law can be interpreted only by the voice of the majority in the Commons. We cannot but suspect that, were the boot on the other foot, the *Globe's* view would be materially modified. The Governor-General who should refuse to act on the advice of his Liberal Cabinet with a good majority at its back, in any case whatever, would be likely to have a pretty uncomfortable season. In the memorable case of the Pacific scandal, it is true, the Liberal leaders strenuously urged the then Governor-General to disregard the advice of his Ministers and use his prerogative to precipitate the crisis. But in that case, as in the present suppositional one, the