

That is what members are elected for—to look after the interests of their constituents, and that is what the candidate most faithfully promised to do when he was canvassing our manufacturer for his vote. . . .

It is evidently of but little use for manufacturers to go to the Government expecting prompt attention to their suggestions, or any attention at all, unless the members whom they elected to serve them perform their duty with spirit and energy. Mere perfunctory service will not answer. . . .

If such energy is not shown by the members chosen for just that purpose, they will be left at home and more sensible men sent to fill their places.

**SATURDAY'S** struggle in Manitoba resulted, as we anticipated, in the Greenway Administration being sustained, though by a smaller majority than we thought probable under the circumstances. A majority of ten or eleven is, however, we suppose, sufficient to give a degree of stability to the Government in so small a House. That being the case, it is better for the public interests, under the party system, that the Opposition should be strong enough to make its influence felt and feared. In regard to the main issue, the school question, the decision of the British Privy Council will now be awaited with anxiety, not unmingled, we dare say, with trepidation. Should that decision affirm the constitutionality of the existing School Act, the question will be as good as settled for all time to come, for it is hardly conceivable that the Dominion Government and Parliament will care to interfere with a law which is declared constitutional by the highest authority and which is so clearly desired by a very large majority of the people of the Province. Should the decision, on the other hand, confirm that of the Canadian Supreme Court and declare the Act unconstitutional, the Province will probably enter upon a new period of struggle with the Ottawa Powers, for it is not likely that the latter, with their views of the rights of the minority, will consider that those rights to be sufficiently respected by the negative course which will, it is understood, be the policy of the Greenway Government, that, viz., of exempting the Roman Catholic population from the taxes for the support of the public schools, but refusing to grant them legislative aid in collecting taxes for the support of their Separate schools. This will give rise to a very complicated controversy. It is deeply to be regretted, but seems to be a matter of course in a Canadian electoral contest, that charges and counter charges of gross bribery and corruption are vehemently made. It is to be hoped that they may be rigidly enquired into, and condign punishment meted out to the guilty on either side.

**IT** is interesting, though not perhaps surprising, that the youngest of the Canadian Provinces should have been the first to adopt and apply the principle of the plebiscite for the decision of a single question. Whatever may be the force of the objections generally urged against this mode of ascertaining public opinion and sentiment in regard to a serious and difficult question, it is very clear that in no other way is it ordinarily possible to find out that opinion with any degree of certainty. The recent British election affords a telling illustration of this fact. Probably there has never been an election in Great Britain, it is at least hard to conceive of one, in which it seemed more desirable, or in which a stronger effort was made, to have one issue supreme. And yet no man can tell to-day, with any approach to certainty, to what extent the result may be relied on as the verdict of the people of Great Britain in regard to Irish Home Rule. But it can no longer be doubted what the sentiments and wishes of the people of Manitoba are with regard to the question of Prohibition. And this is in this case a matter of the very first importance, for all experience demonstrates the futility and worse of passing a prohibitory Act until a very large majority of the people demand it and are prepared to see it enforced. After such an expression, the Manitoba Government can hardly refuse to carry through a prohibitory Bill; in fact, if we mistake not, they are distinctly pledged to do so. Whether the Dominion will contest the right of the Province to enact such legislation remains to be seen, but it seems hardly probable that they will care to raise the constitutional objection in such a case, and on so fine a point as the distinction between regulating the traffic and prohibiting it.

**WHETHER** Gladstone with his somewhat precarious majority of forty-five will or will not proceed immediately upon the re-assembling of Parliament to introduce his Home Rule Bill, it is hardly worth while to

guess, seeing that two or three weeks will decide the question. But that Home Rule, in some form or other, by one party or the other, will be given to Ireland in the near future may be regarded as among the political certainties. The only thing that could now prevent Gladstone or the Liberals from passing such a Bill would be the forestalling of their action in some way by the Conservatives. Reforms and revolutions—it matters not in which class we place it—proverbially go forward, not backward. It is not in the least degree likely that the process of decentralization, once begun, will stop with Ireland. Mr. Gladstone has already made the significant remark that any Home Rule measure given to Ireland shall be of a kind which England and Scotland might claim for themselves should they choose to do so. Mr. Blake, in his speeches to the Irish electors, has not hesitated to express himself unequivocally in favour of the principle of local management of local affairs for each of the great divisions of the kingdom. The congestion of local legislation which has long been chronic in the British Parliament, and the seeming impossibility of overtaking the ever-increasing demands of the different parts of the Empire, to say nothing of the uneconomic and tremendous waste of political power involved in having every petty detail of local legislation attended to by a body of four or five hundred representatives chosen from all parts of the United Kingdom, point to decentralization as the logical solution of the complex problem. Should an Irish Home Rule Bill, under whatever name, be passed within the next two or three years, and should it prove reasonably successful in allaying Irish discontent and freeing the British Parliament from the obstruction which has so long retarded its movements—two pretty large postulates, many will think, yet not beyond the bounds of reasonable probability—nothing is much more likely than that the next decade will hardly pass without seeing Scotland also, and possibly even England herself, with her local legislature. It is not easy to see why so natural an arrangement should not strengthen rather than weaken the bonds which unite the different parts of the kingdom, while the administration of those affairs which are really of national concern would certainly still afford ample occupation for the energies and statesmanship of the central Parliament.

**TO** one of conservative instincts the radical legislation which now looms on the horizon of British politics must be little less than appalling. Even the moderate Liberal of the type of that distinguished statesman who, on a former memorable occasion, after the passing of one of the great Reform Bills, thought the time had come for Liberals to "rest and be thankful," must stand aghast as he catches now and then a glimpse of the vista whose unknown depths recede into the distance before him. And yet it is now clear that all the possibilities and potencies of the future were wrapped up in embryo in those first cautious extensions of the franchise. At the stage which has now been reached no great stretch of imagination is required to foresee "one man, one vote," "one vote, one value," universal suffrage, Welsh disestablishment and Scotch disestablishment, with disestablishment in England as their inevitable consequent, to say nothing of what is involved in the ever lengthening labour programme, among the legislative innovations of the not very remote future. It does not necessarily follow that all these innovations are to be made by Radical Governments. It is quite as likely that some of the most startling departures may take place under the regime of the so-called Conservative party. The old Toryism, as a force in legislation, has scarcely to be reckoned with any longer. It may linger for a time in the shady recesses of the House of Lords. But from the moment, long since past, when the Conservative Government began to compete with the Radicals for the favour of the rising power, the labour vote, from that moment the old contest began to assume the form of a race for popular favour. We were about to add that it is now impossible to tell which party is most likely to be in at the finish. But all the history of the past teaches us that there can be no finish, no finality, no discharge in this march. The old goals are no sooner reached than they become the starting posts for new departures in democratic legislation. Perhaps this is well. In the very nature of things standing still in politics means stagnation and corruption. Almost anything is better than that. The *Spectator* makes a strong point of the fact that in the contest just closed Gladstone's successes have been won in the constituencies which are lowest in point of intelligence and education, and that he has almost invariably lost

ground in such localities as those of the universities, Newcastle, Birmingham, etc. We are not sure that "education" and "intelligence" go together in the political sphere. It is certain that "education," as represented at the great universities, or as synonymous with leisure and culture, has always been, as Mr. Gladstone has pointed out, an absolutely negative quality so far as the right decision of questions involving justice to the people is concerned. Hence we should have included the abolition of university representation among the radical reforms of which Mr. Gladstone's success is the precursor. He is already as good as pledged to that. It is very clear that the England of the next generation will be a very different land from the England of history, or even that of to-day. Whether the change will be for better or for worse posterity must decide. Let us hope for the better.

**THE** hasty passage by both Houses of Congress of the Bill empowering the President of the United States, in certain contingencies which depend entirely upon his own way of looking at the facts involved, to impose heavy tolls upon Canadian passengers and merchandize passing through the canal at Sault Ste. Marie, threatens to bring the long pending canal tolls dispute to an acute stage. That such a crisis should have arisen over the interpretation of a clause in a treaty is certainly discreditable to one or the other of the disputants. It is probable that in this case as in so many others of a similar kind both parties are in the wrong. It is evident from the tenor of such portions of the communications between the two Governments as have been published, as well as from the reports of the meagre debate in Congress, that the question is one of facts as well as of interpretation. Is it or is it not true, for instance, that the Erie canal is absolutely closed against Canadian vessels, as the Canadian Marine Association assert, or only that the American customs laws render it practically useless for Canadian purposes? The result may be the same in either case, and the hardship to Canada is clear, but there is, nevertheless, an important distinction between the two cases. Is it, again, correct that the provisions of Article 30 of the Treaty of Washington, granting certain carrying powers to Canadians in United States' territory, were repealed, as our Government declares, by way of inflicting the penalty provided by treaty for the very thing of which the Washington Government now complains, or was that article cancelled, after due notice of two years, in the exercise of a right secured to that Government irrespective of any infraction or alleged infraction of the Treaty by Canada, as seems to be maintained on the part of the United States?

**IN** the meantime, what is to be done? It is very likely that the unwonted energy with which our neighbours are just now taking up the question and preparing for heroic measures is due quite as much to the necessity of playing to the gallery—which unfortunately means the most unfriendly and disreputable element in American politics—in view of the approaching election, as to any burning sense of wrong in the breasts of the leaders of either party. It is quite possible that means or excuses may be found by the President, who can have no personal desire to do an unfriendly act to a neighbour, for postponing action until after the Presidential election, when calmer counsels will prevail, and better means may be found for settling the questions in dispute. But it will not be safe to trust to that eventuality, under the circumstances. There are unquestionably elements of danger in the situation. Not only the Canadian Government, but, if we may judge from the utterances of the press, the great majority of Canadians, irrespective of party, believe that the refund of tolls complained of is not in violation of the Treaty. (Our own opinions upon that point have often been expressed, but let that pass.) This being the case, it is out of the question that the Canadian Government should yield to threat or compulsion that which it cannot yield to a sense of justice, or even to a conscientious doubt. That it has the power to retaliate with effect is certain, and it will no doubt be strongly urged to do so in case the President should proceed to use the extraordinary powers vested in him by Congress. But once a war of retaliation is begun, who can tell where it will end? Nothing is more certain than that the immediate result would be great damage to the commercial interests of both countries. Another result, not far off, would almost certainly be the mutual withdrawal of the bonding privilege, followed by non-intercourse. When that stage is reached, actual war will be not very far off. And all that for a