

then, have, not "free and independent" electors a right to be sensitive, as well as members. How every elector must be insulted by such laws as that which forbids a candidate for election, or his agents, to give a voter even a cup of coffee or a glass of beer, during an election contest. The idea that an elector could be influenced by so small a courtesy! Where may we be supposed to find a more honourable class of men than those who are selected to sit on the bench as judges, or in the box as jurors? How their cheeks must tingle at the indignity put upon them by Parliament when it forbids them to accept the compliment of even a small gift from some interested party during the progress of a trial. Things must have come to a pretty pass when the most high-minded men in the country are supposed to be capable of being influenced by such a paltry thing as a gift of a few dollars' value. This word "courtesy" which suggests about the strangest and the weakest defence of the present custom was used—*mirabile dictu*! by the venerable Premier himself. We wonder if Sir Oliver would be so narrow as to object to his steward's acceptance of "courtesies" of greater or less value, from the traders from whom he purchases the supplies for the household. Would he countenance the fuss that was made in the Dominion Parliament a year or two since over the acceptance by the managers of certain public departments of certain "courtesies" from those from whom they purchased supplies. Many, we dare say, still hold the old-fashioned prejudice against gifts of pecuniary value being offered or accepted as "courtesies," even from friends, to say nothing of corporations, apart from any question of business relations. Many solvent gentlemen would, we fancy, still regard it as a rather uncomplimentary "courtesy" should a rich stranger, or even a friend, proffer a twenty dollar bank-note or a bundle of lunch tickets as a token of respect either to the person, or to some official position which he might happen to hold.

Another Point
of View.

But there is surely another point of view in which it should not be difficult for the members and adherents of a "democratic"

Government and Legislature to place themselves. There is, if we mistake not, a growing suspicion that the freight and passenger rates, especially the latter, on our railways, are altogether too high to be in keeping with the general tendencies of the times to cheapness, or even to be the most favourable for the railways themselves, from the business point of view. No one who gives the question a moment's thought can fail to see that the free bestowal of passes upon a large number of favoured individuals is one of the influences which are directly opposed to a lowering of rates for the masses. In other words, the railroads of the country are, to a large extent, public property, and it is one of the most important and responsible duties of our legislators to see that they are run in the interests of the people. It is further evident that the larger the number of individuals carried free by these railroads, the more difficult it is for them to lower the rates to suit the circumstances of the less wealthy citizens. Or, to put it in yet another way, it is demonstrable, though it scarcely needs demonstration to an intelligent man, that the passes distributed to members of Parliament and other favoured individuals, by the railway companies, are given, in the long run, at the expense, not of the railway companies, but of the patrons of the roads. The people really pay for the "passes" in higher rates for themselves. Hence if our legislators were actuated by a high and far-seeing sense of their duty to their constituents, they would be much more disposed to forbid the giving of free passes to anybody than to accept them for themselves. We feel very like joining Mr. Haycock in the prophecy that in a few years the

Ontario Legislature will see it in this light, and govern themselves accordingly.

A Practical
Scheme.

The proposal that the numerous lots of land now lying vacant and useless within the City of Toronto should be used, according to a plan which has been tried with considerable success in one or more American cities, by handing it over in small blocks for the cultivation of potatoes by the hundreds of men who are unable to find employment in the city, has much to commend it, and offers little ground for objection. The experiment is, to say the least, well worth trying. The cost to the city will be comparatively small. The underlying principle, that of putting a premium upon industry and thus stimulating self-help, is altogether sound. The relief afforded will, of course, be slow in coming, and care must, therefore, be taken that the scheme be not allowed to interfere with prompter methods of supplying the wants of those who may be in the meantime in absolute need. But, on the other hand, it will be no small matter for an industrious poor man to be enabled to raise by his own labour fifteen or twenty bushels of potatoes for the use of his family during the coming fall and winter, and to do this without injury or expense to anyone, save the small sum per head necessary either from the city or from private sources for ploughing and seed. By no means least of the incidental advantages of the plan is that it will tend in many cases, we may hope, to create a taste for the cultivation of the soil. While it might be only reasonable that some allowance in the matter of taxes should be made to the owners of vacant lots who ask it in the shape of remittance of a fair proportion of the taxes on the lands so used, care will be needed to prevent the scheme from being taken advantage of to obtain exemption for lands held for speculative purposes. Many of the owners will, no doubt, decline to accept any consideration for a kindness which will cost them nothing, and do their property no harm.

The University
Commission.

We have no disposition to put ourselves in contempt of court by commenting on the proceedings of the University Commission while in progress, but we take leave to say a word with reference to the report that the two Councils of the University have passed a resolution authorizing the employment of a solicitor to be paid from the general fund of the institution. The argument which has been put forward condemning this action on the ground that it is using the funds which in part belong to students, as including fees paid by them, is, of course, absurd, as the fees are paid for value received, and are, therefore, no longer the property of those who have paid them. But, on the other hand, there seems to be a manifest impropriety in the Councils' being permitted to use the money of the University, that is, the funds its authorities have in trust for educational purposes, for their own defence against charges of incompetence or misgovernment. If either the Faculty or the students feel the need of legal aid before the Commission they should surely procure it at their own expense. The Commissioners are appointed to make a general inquiry into the causes of the trouble between the University authorities and the students. It may be the most convenient and effective way of conducting the enquiry to permit the students to appear by Counsel as plaintiffs and the Faculties as defendants, if the former are willing to put themselves in that position. But it was clearly understood that the Commission was not created at the demand of the students, but in the interests of the University and the cause of higher education for which it stands. If the inquiry