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CURRENT TOPICS.

The answer of the Supreme Court to the questions submitted to it on behalf of the Canadian Government, touching its powers in relation to the Manitoba school question, will have surprised few, unless by the lack of unanimity on the part of the judges. A contrary decision, affirming the right of the Administration of the day to consider the question of interfering with the legislation of a province in a matter declared to be within its jurisdiction by the highest judicial authority in the Empire, would have carried with it possible consequences which we are glad it is unnecessary to contemplate. At the moment of writing we have before us nothing but the bare facts of the decision, but as this is, we suppose, to appear as a "reasoned judgment," we shall at a later date, we presume, be able to read each Justice's arguments in

support of his conclusions. Meanwhile, let us hope that this vexed question may now be finally put to rest. An appeal to the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council, if available, would be almost fatuous under the circumstances.

A good deal of interest is felt in the bill which Mr. Conmee proposes to introduce in the Legislature, for giving the ballot in the election of Separate School trustees, and which it is believed will receive the support of the Government, and, therefore, become law. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a good deal of interest was felt in the measure until the Premier gave the public an inkling of the kind of measure it is to be. Such a bill as is foreshadowed in the Premier's speech in the debate on the address cannot have a very serious interest for friend or opponent. It will be a fine illustration of how not to do the thing that is supposed to be done. Sir Oliver intimates that the bill will simply make it optional for Separate School boards to adopt the ballot if they wish. This is in line with the Archbishop's suggestion that the ballot has not been asked for by the boards. Of course not. The boards are not the voters. They have been elected under the open-vote system, and are the products of whatever undue influences may have been brought to bear by the ecclesiastical authorities, whereas if there is any real need of the ballot it is to protect the voters from this very influence. The fact that the existing law conditions the use of the ballot in the election of Public School trustees in like manner upon the choice of the trustees themselves, simply proves that that law is also a farce, so far as the protection of the voter is concerned. Rather it would be a farce were the Protestant electors exposed to any such pressure or intimidation as that which is alleged to create the necessity for the secret ballot for the protection of the Roman Catholic voter.

If the people of Canada are well pleased with the manifestations of interest in their country and its concerns by those who occupy the highest place as the representatives of Royalty, we may hope that the Governor-General and Lady Aberdeen, on their part, are equally well pleased with the heartiness of the reception everywhere given them in their visits to various parts of the country. We venture to hope that the demonstrations of welcome have been found and will be found lacking in no element of

respect or cordiality. We are sure that those demonstrations will, as a rule, be free from everything savouring of affectation or servility. In this connection we may, we hope, be pardoned for expressing our regret that the students of our chief University, in the exuberance of their pleasure at the visit of His Excellency, gave the sanction of their example to an old custom which is, it seems to us, one of those which are much better honoured in the breach than in the observance. We refer to their putting themselves in the place of the beasts of burden in conveying their vice-regal visitors from one part of the grounds to another. We do not know the origin of this custom, but we have never been able to attach any meaning to it which is not quite too suggestive of Oriental servility and so quite out of place in the free, democratic atmosphere of this Western world. We cannot conceive of it as pleasing to those in whose honor it was in this case done, though, of course, they could not take exception to the form which any compliment paid to them might assume. We had hoped that this mode of honouring public men had become obsolete in Canada.

The American Journal of Politics contains an excellent article by a young Canadian writer, Mr. W. Sanford Evans, President of the Canadian Club, Hamilton. The subject is "Canada and Political Re-union, from a Canadian Standpoint." The paper is a reply, and a very effective one, to an article which appeared in the December number of the same magazine, from the pen of F. W. Glen, entitled, "The Political Re-union of the United States and Canada." We have hitherto had little to say with reference to stray articles like that of Mr. Glen, or the tirades, kindred in some respects, though different in style and spirit, which have lately appeared in such journals as the *New York Sun*, the *Philadelphia Press*, etc., because we thought little needed to be said. The writer, be he English, Canadian, or American, who can to-day see any indications of the slightest tendency on the side of Canada towards political union—"re-union" is, as Mr. Evans shows, a misnomer—with the United States, must possess a vision so much keener than the ordinary that any attempt to compare notes with him would be utterly fruitless. On the other hand, the man who can suppose, at this stage of Canadian history, that Canada can be coerced into a union for which she has no desire, by commercial pressure, or by pressure of