

of the Bar and of the public in the matter. So far, the action of Mr. Mercier's administration seems to have been in response to a genuine need. It is already pretty clear that the exercise of the veto will be resisted to the utmost, and that the contest will give new life to the demand for a revision of the constitution.

SECRETARY FAIRCHILD is reported to have said a week or two since, speaking in the name of the United States Government, that that Government had relaxed its vigilance in protecting the Alaskan waters against Canadian poachers, because the British Government was proposing such legislation as would put a stop to future depredations. The announcement is somewhat mysterious, and may, perhaps, be not uncharitably supposed to have been made purposely so, with a view to giving the matter a quietus pending the Presidential election. The desirability of protecting the seals from extermination is obvious; the difficulty is to understand how any legislation either of the British or the American Government, or of both combined, can afford such protection on the high seas. It is evident that Great Britain has no more right to legislate in the matter than the United States; that is, she has no right at all. The most probable supposition is, perhaps, that the British Government is moving to secure the adhesion of all the Maritime nations to some international agreement for the regulation and protection of the seal fisheries of the North Pacific. Such a convention would obviously be difficult to arrange, and more difficult to enforce, but it may be considered worth attempting. The assumption that England is negotiating with this object in view affords the best explanation of the otherwise unaccountable delay in vindicating the rights of Canadian fishermen in Behring's Sea.

RECENT events in Quebec have shown afresh the inherent and radical defect of the political system which has as one of its factors an Upper Legislative Assembly, or Senate, composed of members appointed by partisan Governments. It is obvious, on the slightest reflection, that when, after a long tenure of office has enabled the leader of one party to secure a majority in the Upper House, a change of Government takes place, the two Houses will almost inevitably come into collision. The result, sooner or later, is either a dead lock, or a reconstruction by methods of more or less doubtful character. It is, of course, contrary to every conception of popular government that the legislation of the people's representatives should be at the mercy of a branch of the Legislature dominated by appointees of the opposite party. Unless the new Premier and his cabinet are more than usually high-minded, the work of manipulation and intrigue is pretty sure to be commenced forthwith. The recent resignation by the Hon. Mr. Champagne of his seat in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec, and his acceptance of a magistracy in the newly-created court, is the case just now in point. There may be those who can believe that this gentleman's unexpected support of a Government measure to which his Conservative friends were opposed, and his appointment a few weeks after to a more remunerative office, were wholly unrelated events, but the belief will be confined to an unsuspicious few. It is easy for political opponents to denounce the Quebec Premier as guilty of bestowing, and the retiring Councillor of accepting, a bribe, and we hold no brief for the defence of either. But it is obvious that the system which offers so heavy a premium for such transactions is wrong at bottom, and that the impartiality and usefulness of an Upper House so constituted can never be above suspicion.

WHY is it that public opinion seems so often to set up a lower standard of morality for a nation than for an individual? When a man gets into a dispute with his neighbour his best friends do not hesitate to point out to him wherein they think he may be in the wrong, and to assure him that it is no less the part of true manliness to admit and correct his error, than to maintain his right. But no sooner do a whole people become involved in a dispute with a neighbouring nation than a large class of politicians and journalists begin to protest loudly that the true patriot must support the Government in every particular, irrespective of his own conscientious convictions. The moment a person of more than usual candour ventures to express a doubt as to whether the Government may not be in the wrong in some one or other of its contentions, the shout of "traitor" is raised and re-echoed from one end of the country to the other. "To stand by the Government," is proclaimed as the whole duty of every citizen. It surely does not require very highly developed moral perceptions to see that this is both wrong and mischievous. It is not only immoral in principle, but it is disastrous in practice. If it is right and patriotic for Canadians to take such a position in support of their Government, it is equally right and patriotic for the people of the United States to take the same attitude in support of theirs. The obvious result is to bring about a state of affairs

under which all considerations of right, truth, and justice are lost sight of and negotiation and reconciliation become impossible. Can it be doubtful that the bravest citizen and the truest patriot is the man who will uphold the action of his Government just so far as he sees it to be just and right, and condemn it when he sees it to be wrong.

THE substance of the charges that are being urged with so much vehemence against Canada by Congressional orators may be summed up as follows:—It is alleged that the Treaty of 1818, on which Canada takes her stand in the matter of the fisheries, is antiquated and out of harmony with the spirit of the age and the comity of nations; that the Canadian laws and regulations, made from time to time for the enforcement of that treaty, have been needlessly harsh and irritating; that the Canadian authorities and officials have carried out those laws and regulations in an unfriendly manner and spirit; and that in the matter of the Canal tolls the Canadian Government has violated the spirit of the Washington Treaty. Referring to the defences that have been made by Canadian ministers in recent speeches, they are found, with one exception, to be tolerably complete. To the first count it is replied that it is the fault not of Canada but of the United States that the two countries are thrown back upon the Treaty of 1818 for the regulation of their relations in the matter of the fisheries, and that Canada is ready at any moment to enter into negotiations for a new treaty to supersede the ancient one; but that, in the meantime, it would be utterly unreasonable to expect her to waive the very valuable rights of property secured to her by the old convention. If the meaning and construction of the Treaty itself are open to question, that again is matter for negotiation, but the United States is the party that refuses to negotiate. Little, surely, is left to be said on that score. The Ministers naturally maintain that their laws and regulations for the protection of the fisheries are fair and reasonable. They claim also, that they have been enforced with the utmost moderation, the Government officers being instructed to give the United States fishermen, in every case, the benefit of a doubt. Both these contentions are, in their very nature, largely matters of opinion. Demonstrative evidence in regard to either is out of the question. The refusal of permission to trans-ship fish in bond across Canadian territory touches the sorest point, though so high an American authority as Mr. Putnam has admitted that the trans-shipment of fish in bond from the fishing ground is not recognized by the ordinary comity of nations, and has never been asserted except when granted by express treaty provision. As, however, distinguished Canadian authorities do not hesitate to express the opposite view, it might, perhaps, be better were the Canadian Government to take the broadest ground, and admit this to a place among the debatable points. On the whole, whatever may have been the case a few years ago, American Senators themselves will scarcely challenge Minister Foster's emphatic declaration that there is not a single instance on record where an act of humanity, or a right of hospitality, due to a friendly power, has been withheld from the fishermen of the United States, so far as it applies to the last two years.

THERE is, however, an exception to the completeness of the Canadian case as presented by the Ministers. Is it not a little singular that one may look in vain through all the speeches for a word in defence of the Government's action in the matter of the Canal tolls? At least, if there is such a word we have failed to find it. Why is this? In the President's message, and in the Congressional debate, Canada's alleged violation of good faith in this particular is made one of the two cardinal grievances. One of the two radical strokes provided for in the Retaliation Bill now pending is directed specifically against the alleged discrimination in the refund of Canal tolls. There is, no doubt, much more probability that this part of the Retaliation Act will be immediately put in force than that the bonding privileges will be withheld. Proclamation can scarcely be made in reference to the latter, in the absence of a pretext in the shape of some fresh instance of alleged unfriendliness, and such instances are now hard to find. In the case of the former the grievance complained of already exists, and is in daily operation. Why then this ministerial reticence in regard to the source of the most immediate danger? Does the Government thus concede, as one, at least, of the most influential journals supporting it has done, that in this regard it has no case? If so, it would surely be much better to frankly admit the mistake and repeal at once the obnoxious order in-council. In other respects the Ministry is undoubtedly wise in resolving to await calmly the issue of events. Any advances on its part, even if such were in themselves desirable, would be pretty sure to meet with neglect, if not with rebuff, while the Presidential conflict is raging.