

forgotten. They have refused to be led by an agitation based on creed differences and have effectually sat upon their clergy, who tried to force them into such a position. This is the meaning at least which would be taken from the vote in Quebec, based on a superficial view of the result. However, the actual meaning of a popular vote is often very different from what it would naturally be supposed to be.

In the Maritime Provinces the Conservatives have a small majority, but they failed to make the clean sweep there that it was claimed they would. Premier Tupper's strength in that part of the country was counted upon to give the government a very large majority in those provinces.

In the West the result has come out fairly close to calculations, and the Liberal party owe their victory first to Quebec and secondly to the West. British Columbia, which has always returned a solid government contingent, has elected four Liberals out of a total of six members. In the Territories, which has also always returned a solid government support, but one government candidate was elected, and that one has a majority of only two, which will probably be changed to a minority on a recount. Manitoba never before sent more than a committee of one to assist the Liberals, but now elects three members in opposition to the government. The school question and opposition to the high tariff were the principal features which led to this result in the West. A remarkable feature of the campaign in the West was the promise from the Premier himself, of large expenditures of money on public works. In these new regions, where public improvements are so urgently needed, these promises no doubt had a great effect, but not sufficient to overcome the Liberal candidates entirely. Now that the elections are over, The Commercial may be permitted to express its belief that election promises of expenditures of this nature are extremely objectionable, and should be frowned upon by those who favor a clean contest.

The result in Winnipeg may justly be considered the greatest surprise of the contest, in the West at least. At the beginning of the campaign, popular opinion, so far as it could be gauged by surface indications, appeared to be largely in favor of Mr. Martin, and it was thought Mr. Macdonald showed great moral courage in undertaking the contest. Right here at the seat of the school question difficulty, where the people have so fervently declared for national schools, the very framer of the national school bill was defeated. The result would on the surface indicate the fickleness of public opinion, and Winnipeg already has gained notoriety for fickleness in this direction, owing to the remarks of a late member of the now defeated government. However, to those who understand the local situation, there were other causes entering the contest which would mitigate the charge against Winnipeg of fickleness of this nature. In a city of this size there is a considerable labor vote which was influenced by the promises of expensive public works. A great effort was also made to prove that Mr. Laurier was as strongly

pledged to coercion as was the Tupper government. Mr. Macdonald's personal popularity, and the prestige of his position as a minister in the government, counted for much in his favor. But it seems almost impossible that any combination of circumstances could account for the defeat of Mr. Martin squarely in Winnipeg, in the face of public opinion here on the school question, unless on the aforesaid ground of the extreme fickleness of public opinion in Winnipeg. The fight in the city was the most vigorous one ever made here, and it is certain that the government looked upon the carrying of Winnipeg as a necessary feature of their coercion policy. There is much talk about bribery in Winnipeg. The Commercial has no comments to make as to such allegations; but certainly the election here seems to have been bungled, as is indicated by the fact that voting was temporarily stopped at several polling booths, owing to ballots running out. An analysis of the vote in Winnipeg shows that it was by far the largest ever cast here. Mr. Martin had 639 more votes than he received at the by-election when he was first returned for Winnipeg, two years ago, and the total vote was 5,796, as compared with 3,907 at the by-election.

The result of the elections in Manitoba would indicate on the surface that a large number of people here are in favor of the coercion policy of the Conservative government. This is the only meaning which can be taken from the vote; but expressions of public opinion are often very misleading, and in the case of Manitoba, (and possibly it may be the same in Quebec), the vote certainly belies the actual feeling on the school question. The vote in Manitoba may be accounted for to some extent by the fact that many people considered the school question as practically dead, and that no further attempt would be made to pass a coercion bill, no matter which party carried the day. Secondly, two Liberal candidates were defeated by the advent of a third party candidate, running on practically the same platform as the Liberals. While the Patrons did not succeed in electing a candidate, they succeeded in splitting the vote against coercion and in favor of tariff reform, thus ensuring Conservative victories. As for coercion, with Manitoba declaring apparently (but not really) in favor of coercion, with the Quebec vote solidly arrayed on one side of the house and with many Conservatives committed to coercion, the position of Parliament will be more favorable to the passage of a coercive measure than it was before dissolution, if such a bill should be introduced.

As to the result of the elections on the whole, the weakness of the Liberal party is probably owing to the fact that their majorities are not more evenly distributed over the country. The fact of the Liberal majority coming in largely from one province is a feature which may bode the party no good.

As to the effect of the change on the country, it should on the whole be beneficial; and should be beneficial to the party which now retires into opposition. A change of government occasionally seems necessary to the welfare of the country, and a party too long in power is very liable to degenerate. At any rate the governing party is sure in time

to become laden with barnacles who can only be shook off by a term in opposition. Political schemers have a great affinity for the party in power, and they will find some excuse for leaving the opposition and going over to the governing body. If the Liberals remain long in power they will have many of the barnacles who are now attached to the Conservative party. This is one of the advantages of an occasional change of government, and one which is a great advantage also to the party going into opposition.

Regarding the tariff, The Commercial does not expect that any radical change will be made. The Liberal policy, as declared, is for revenue tariff, but regard must be had for existing conditions. The greatest care will have to be exercised in revising the tariff and changes will have to be made gradually and slowly. The leading men of the Liberal party have given assurance of their recognition of the necessity for caution and moderation in revising the tariff. The trade policy of Canada has been brought more into line with the imperial policy regarding closer trade with the empire.

What the Liberal policy regarding the West will be, is the feature of interest here. The government has made no special effort to develop the West for years, but on the eve of the elections great things were promised in the way of public works to develop the country. These promises of course now go by the board. The Liberals have promised nothing specifically. The Liberal party has always had the blame of having failed to recognize the value of the West, and of opposing everything in the interest of the development of the West. The Commercial will not discuss the justification or otherwise for this belief. Just here we may say, however, that the Liberals will now have an opportunity of showing what truth there is in this oft-repeated contention. The leaders of the party should consider the wisdom of ridding their party of this stigma, by entering upon a vigorous policy for the development of Western Canada. They are not, we repeat, bound by any election promises, but performances will be more to the point than promises made to influence an election contest.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THERE seems to have been something very loose about the manner in which the new buildings for the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition association have been managed. The most flagrant violation of the plans and specifications seems to have been practised by some of the contractors at least, and this was not made public until it was forced upon the attention of the city council by a deputation from a local labor society, composed of carpenters and others. The only excuse for this state of affairs is the divided responsibility between the Exhibition Board and the City Council. A case of too many cooks, as it were. As the city is advancing the money to construct the buildings, the work should no doubt have been carried on under the supervision of the city. Fortunately no money has been paid yet on the contracts, and none should be paid until the work is done properly. In the meantime the parties who are re-