

intelligence. The discovery that a means of settling the boundary line between Canada and Alaska satisfactory to both parties can be easily found, is also very gratifying, and it is highly desirable that such means may be made use of at the earliest practicable moment, as it is also that every possible cause of future misunderstanding between the two countries should be removed out of the way, as opportunity occurs. Should it appear that the expense of a full delimitation would be greater than the country can well afford at present, or than the exigencies of the situation demand, may it not yet be desirable and practicable for the Governments concerned to agree upon the exact method, binding themselves to follow it out at such future time as circumstances may, in the opinion of either party, make it desirable to do so? The understanding which is said to have been reached for reciprocity in matters of wreckage, salvage, and towing, will, if carried into effect, do away with a state of affairs which has long been a standing disgrace to both countries, or if the fault has been, as is not at all likely, wholly that of either party, a double disgrace to that party. But that which is perhaps of greatest value in connection with this conference is that in it representatives of the two Governments have come together in a neighbourly spirit, have talked over matters of common interest in a conciliatory and kindly manner, and have taken leave of each other, as we may infer, with feelings of greater mutual respect and regard. Let us hope that this incident may lead to the discontinuance of the practice, which has of late been too common on the part of certain journals, of losing no opportunity to have a "fling" at the Government, institutions, or citizens of the Republic. In addition to its lack of dignity and right feeling, the policy of perpetual "nagging" is one of the most mischievous and dangerous that can obtain between neighbours.

WHATEVER may be the abstract merits or demerits of the party system, it must be admitted by all that in order to the effective working of that system a strong and vigorous Opposition is almost as indispensable as a strong and vigorous Administration. In view of the results of the recent bye-elections there seems to be some reason to fear that the Dominion Commons may be for a time without that safeguard of popular rights and well-considered legislation. Should so undesirable a state of things ensue, as the result of the series of severe defeats which the Opposition has just now met with, it will not be because the representatives of the party in the House are not still sufficient in numbers and in ability to perform their constitutional functions effectively, but because their reverses shall be found to have left their leaders or themselves divided in opinions and counsels. We have, of course, no knowledge that anything of the kind is likely to occur. The statements of political adversaries are unreliable in such cases, as they are not in the least likely to have had access to the secret counsels of their opponents. It is true that, though the eloquence of Mr. Laurier in his discussion of the Speech was marked and characteristic, there was a noticeable absence of that unshaken confidence, not perhaps in the merits of the party policy, but in its chances of success at any early day, which is fatal to effectiveness. This is not to be wondered at under the circumstances, seeing that the leaders have not had time to consider the situation and decide upon their future course, and that they cannot even yet know the full extent of their calamity. The whole subject of the future policy of the party is probably still in the clouds, for however assured the leaders may be that their former policy was the best possible one for the country, or even that the majority of the people still favour it, they are too astute not to admit that a second-best course, which could secure an early majority, if such a course can be found, would be preferable from the practical point of view to the absolutely best which has been proved to be unattainable, at least for years to come. There is, however, nothing to be done but to wait for the developments that cannot be long delayed. The thoughtful of all shades of politics will look for the issue with deep interest, realizing that not only the work of the session, but the course of future events, depends to a great degree upon the decision. With regard to the rumours set in motion by interested opponents touching Mr. Laurier's alleged resignation, it is useless to speculate. It seems by no means unlikely that, in view of his want of success at the polls, the chivalrous leader might deem it his duty to give his followers an opportunity to try their fortunes under another general; but it is in the highest

degree unlikely, one would suppose, that those followers would think of accepting the resignation of so eloquent and able a leader—especially in the conspicuous absence, so far as appears to onlookers, of any one in their ranks who could be regarded as even second to him in the rare combination of qualities essential in so difficult a position.

RECENT utterances have made certain what was pretty well understood before, viz., that so long as the present commercial policy of the United States prevails—that is, so long as the Republican party is in the ascendant—no reciprocity arrangement is possible between our neighbours and ourselves, save on terms which the Canadian people have just now emphatically condemned at the polls. There can be no doubt, we suppose, that the recent statement of Mr. John W. Foster, in his letter to the New York Chamber of Commerce, correctly represents the policy of the present Washington Administration on the subject. Internal evidence, as well as the influential and confidential position Mr. Foster holds in trade negotiations, leaves no room for doubt that he speaks by the book. The great Republic has, of course, a perfect political right to construct its commercial policy on such lines as it may choose. It need not even be implied that its statesmen are actuated by motives more intensely selfish than those which rule in the Governments of other nations, whatever may be the fact in regard to the breadth or soundness of the principles on which their policy is framed. That policy is, in a word, the narrowest Americanism. "It is," says Mr. Foster, "the duty and the intention of the United States to cultivate the most intimate and liberal commercial relations with such of our neighbours as recognize American (in its broadest sense) as paramount to European influence on this hemisphere. To all such countries we should open the doors of trade as wide and as freely as the interests of our own established industries will permit. Beyond that the spirit of genuine Americanism does not require nor permit us to go." If this is indeed "the spirit of genuine Americanism," Americanism is a contracted and purblind thing. Like the old Roman poet, the American statesman seems to regard the ocean as intended by a cautious deity to shut off all intercourse between the nations situated on opposite sides of it, and to regard with pious horror those adventurous members of the human family who, like the Britons, dare to overleap the barrier or to turn it into a highway of commerce between nations occupying different hemispheres. It is for the American people themselves to decide whether this is a policy worthy of the "greatest and freest people under the sun"—the people who have long regarded themselves, and have been regarded by many others, as specially set apart to give to all the nations representing the Old World civilizations an object-lesson in liberty, self-government and popular enlightenment. Why should the spirit of American commercial enterprise confine itself to this hemisphere? Why should it not reach out for a commanding position in the commerce of the world instead of letting a pent-up America contract its commercial ambition? The questions will no doubt be asked and answered by the American people sooner or later in the years to come.

LEAVING, however, as we must perforce do, to the American Congress and people to make their own commercial policy as narrow as a false political economy and an unworthy national prejudice may dictate, we turn to the question which more immediately concerns us, and concerns us more deeply than any other question at the present crisis in our history. The state of Canadian affairs at the present moment is briefly this: The Washington authorities have distinctly intimated that discrimination against the Mother Country is the price which must be paid by Canada for any measure of commercial reciprocity with that country, while the people of Canada have as distinctly declared that they will have none of it on such terms. Whatever anyone may think of the wisdom of this resolve, or however the legitimacy of the methods by which the popular expression has been obtained may be called in question, there can be no doubt that practically this is the meaning of the remarkable success of the Government in the bye-elections, and that unless the Opposition can make good their threats in regard to coming revelations to a much greater extent than there seems any reason to expect, this decision holds good for at least the term of the present Parliament. Now it can hardly be doubted by any one whose eyes are not dimmed by partyism that the situation is serious. The great nation

at the South has set out to control the trade of the Continent and, unfortunately for us, by reason of its enormous superiority in population and wealth it can undoubtedly do so to a very great extent. It is worse than useless to shut our eyes to the fact. That will make it none the less the fact and none the less disastrous. Canada can live without intercourse with the United States. Whether she can grow and prosper without it is another question. In order to her doing so, some new commercial policy must be devised, some new outlet for the energy and enterprise of her citizens must be found. It will never do to sit down content with the mere negative decision which has been pronounced. True, it might be possible to continue to exist in that way. The resources of the country, undeveloped as they are, might suffice to afford occupation and a comfortable living for the present population. We might even make some slow increase in numbers and wealth. But the sturdy and ambitious young men of the country will never be content with a mere stationary existence or even with a snail-like progress. Realizing the greatness of our possibilities they will naturally expect more than this. In other words, it seems imperative that if the debilitating exodus of our young men is to be stopped, the light of hope in Canada's future must be rekindled by some more active and promising policy than has hitherto been had. There has been, unless we are seriously mistaken in our observations, during the current campaign, a growing tendency to speak of absolute free trade, on the lines which have given England her commercial supremacy, as not only theoretically and logically the more consistent policy, but as possibly a practicable way out of our present difficulties. An increasing number of the thoughtful are evidently beginning to ask themselves the question put to Canadian Liberals by the London *Economist*: "Why, if the Liberal party are sincere in their preference for complete free trade over mere unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, they should speak of the one as being less attainable than the other." The *Economist* does not, it is true, reason very cogently when it goes on to say, "Neither can be obtained until they have succeeded in winning over to their side a majority of the electorate; but, given that majority, why should it not be used for the one purpose as well as for the other;" thus ignoring the fact that the policy is at least as necessary for winning over the majority as the majority for carrying out the policy. But the *Economist's* suggestion is at least worthy of consideration by the statesmen and people of Canada, seeing that while free trade would demonstrably be the most effective of all possible methods for increasing our commerce with the Mother Country it would at the same time be the most powerful pressure that could be brought to bear upon the United States in favour of a reduction of tariff and a more liberal trade policy. Mr. John W. Foster is of opinion that it is only when a country maintains a protective tariff that it is in a position to offer inducements to other countries for better trade relations, but it can scarcely be doubted that a policy of free trade in Canada would be more effective at Washington than all the retaliatory tariffs that could be enacted.

ACTING on a suggestion in President Harrison's message, the United States Senate last week directed its Committee on Foreign Relations to report a Bill empowering the Federal Courts to take cognizance of offences committed in any State against the treaty rights of foreigners. This action is a tardy recognition of a grave defect in the working of the United States Constitution which might have been more frankly acknowledged on the occasion which made it manifest, without detriment to the national dignity and with good effect upon the aggrieved nation. That occasion was, of course, the Italian affair in New Orleans. It will be remembered that at that time Italy was unable to get any more satisfactory answer to her demand for redress for the murder of some of her citizens than that the Federal authorities could do nothing except pay an indemnity, if the facts seemed to warrant it, to the relatives of the victims. They could not even investigate the case, because it belonged to the jurisdiction of the State in which the crime was committed. We pointed out at the time how utterly unsatisfactory was the reply, inasmuch as the United States Government would not have for a moment permitted Italy to deal directly with the State in question. Consequently the condition of affairs was such that any outrage might be perpetrated upon the persons or property of foreigners in the Republic, without the nation of which the injured parties were citizens having any means of obtaining satisfaction—unless,