

the case of any other citizen. It has, on former occasions, been argued with ability by a well-known writer, that the Government and the courts were wrong in making or determining it to be unlawful for the Roman Catholic clergy to make use of the fear of other-world penalties in order to compel their parishioners to vote as they wished. The weapons thus used were, after all, it was urged, in substance, purely spiritual weapons and consequently should not come within the cognizance of Parliament or the civil power. There is a plausibility and verisimilitude about such an application of a broad principle upon which all are agreed, which makes one hesitate to controvert it. But its refutation is clearly contained, it seems to us, in the *reductio ad absurdum* above used. Granted that interference of the civil authority in such a case is a violation of religious liberty, and it follows that, in a country in which the balance of power is held by the adherents of the church in question, the ecclesiastical authorities may speedily become the real rulers of the State, and may proceed to exact any special privileges and immunities they may choose to claim. The conclusion of the whole matter is that while the grand principle of religious liberty implies for every individual citizen absolute freedom of faith and worship, it also, and for that very reason, implies that these liberties must, in the case of religious societies, be limited by the condition that the right of organization and worship be so used as not to interfere with either the civil or the religious rights of any individual citizen. If this general solution of the somewhat perplexing problem which is just now up for discussion be accepted, the application to the particular case in hand, and to any other which may arise, becomes comparatively easy.

THE discussion raised by the proposal to hand over the Intercolonial Railway to the Canadian Pacific Company, as one of the considerations in return for the establishment of a fast Atlantic steamship service by way of a Canadian port, has, if we do not misread it, made two points pretty clear. The first is that public opinion in Canada is not yet prepared to consent to the bestowment of the Intercolonial upon any private corporation so as to make it virtually or absolutely the property of such corporation. The second is that, in particular, the Canadian people will not be easily persuaded that it would be wise that so costly an addition should be made to the enormous bonuses already bestowed from the public chest upon the Canadian Pacific Company. The simple fact is that if the Intercolonial can be made profitable under private management there is no sufficient reason why it may not be made at least to pay expenses as the property of the Dominion. We have only to suppose, as is by no means improbable, that within a few years after receiving so handsome a donation the Company in question would be found paying handsome yearly dividends from the road, to see how clearly the Government and people would stand convicted of incapacity and folly in having given away so valuable a property. The *Globe*, whose position in regard to this matter is hard to understand, reminds us that able Ministers, under both Liberal and Conservative administrations, have failed to make the accounts of the road balance, by hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly. But the failure in both cases is easily accounted for by the simple fact that the road has been run on political, not commercial, principles. Had the management been put into the hands of a competent, non-political manager, and he been told to run it on commercial principles, the result might have been very different. It is not, however, to be hastily assumed that the best use to which the road can be put as the property of the Dominion is to make it a paying concern in the commercial sense. Of course the enormous deficits of late years must be stopped or very materially reduced, but those deficits are so clearly due, in a large measure, to the bad policy above indicated that there can be no reasonable doubt of the possibility of reducing them, even under Government management, to very much smaller dimensions. But it must not be forgotten that the road was originally built, not for the purpose of earning a dividend, but as a condition and bond of confederation, without which the Maritime Provinces would have absolutely refused to consider the question of union. True, it may be that its necessity or usefulness for the purpose contemplated may not now exist to the same degree as at first, but it is still a question whether it would not even now be more profitable for the Confederation, from the national, as distinct from the simply commercial, point of view, that the road should

continue to be the property of the Dominion and be run at a considerable annual loss, than that it should be made a profitable piece of property by a huge corporation, ready to exact the last farthing that the traffic will bear.

BE that as it may, the objection from the other point of view indicated should be insuperable. One has but to glance at the map of Canada and note how the population is strung along in a belt of at the most but a few hundred miles in width, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and how the Canadian Pacific, with the ownership of the Intercolonial, would run through this whole belt, with tentacles extended north and south wherever there is any considerable widening of the area of settlement, and to suppose its two ends connected by highly subsidized steamship lines, with Europe and Asia, to get some conception of how overpowering the influence of this giant corporation would become. If it be said that it is only the through travel which would result from such an arrangement which could enable the Company to make the line pay, and that the benefit should therefore accrue to the company, the answer is that the Dominion which has poured out its millions so freely for the construction of the present transcontinental road, and which is to supply the very liberal subsidies, would have a right to some small share of the profits. No injustice would be done to the Company, which would still have the lion's share of the pecuniary returns. Of course, it would be necessary that the Company managing the steamboats should have every necessary facility in the shape of running powers over the road. But this could surely be provided for on favourable terms, without either alienating the national property, or giving the Canadian Pacific any undue advantage over other railways. We hope it is not necessary to add that this view is not the outcome of any feelings but those of friendliness towards the Company whose energy and enterprise have already been of great service to the country, and whose admirable foresight and management have won the admiration of Canadians of all classes and parties. But railway companies, like other private corporations, are run on selfish principles, and it would be unreasonable to expect that any such company, having it in its power to further its own interests through the exercise of political influence or commercial pressure, would hesitate to do so. Those who can remember the part that has been sometimes played in the past in Canada by railway companies, which did not possess half the resources and means of influence which the Canadian Pacific already controls, would, we feel sure, elect to make haste more slowly in securing the desired fast Atlantic service, were that necessary, rather than run the risk of having both its political and its commercial interests at some future day too completely in the power of one mighty corporation.

A TRANSIENT revival of interest in the work of the Caron Commission has been caused by the publication of Mr. Edgar's reply to a communication received from J. S. Archibald, Esq., Q.C., and F. J. Bisailon, Esq., Q.C., inviting him to aid them in the further investigation before the Royal Commission, of the charges against Sir Adolphe Caron. In their letter the learned counsel labour to convince Mr. Edgar that he did wrong in refusing to appear before the Commission to prosecute the charges made by Minister Bowell. They maintain that, so far from the charges as laid by Mr. Bowell being designed to narrow the scope of the Enquiry, they actually afford a wider scope for investigation than his own charges, as originally formulated in the House. Their arguments fail, however, to convince Mr. Edgar, who re-affirms his opinion that "some very important charges were wholly omitted, while others were garbled beyond recognition." The fact that no answer was before made by the counsel to Mr. Edgar's reply to their previous communication, which reply was dated September 13, and that, while in that letter he expressed doubts as to the admissibility of certain evidence which he would wish to adduce, under the Bowell charges, he received no intimation that that such evidence would be admitted until every one of the witnesses he had named had been examined and dismissed, afforded Mr. Edgar an opportunity of which he was not slow to avail himself to cast suspicion upon the frankness of their long silence upon this point. The upshot of the matter is that he repeats his refusal to take part in the investigation, for the reasons given in his first communication. From the closing sentences of Mr.

Edgar's letter it may be inferred that he intends, on the submission of the report of the Commission to Parliament, to renew his demand for a "full, fair, and open enquiry," relying on "an aroused and indignant public opinion," as the result of the partial disclosures made before the Commission, to insist that these disclosures shall be "probed to the bottom." [The reply of Messrs. Archibald and Bisailon appeared too late for notice this week.]

IT is gratifying to learn that the recent conference between representatives of Newfoundland and members of the Canadian Government was harmonious and bids fair to lead to a friendly adjustment of the trade and fisheries questions in dispute between the two countries. This is as it should be. The Governments of both countries are much better employed in thus amicably discussing and settling such difficulties than in vexing each other with tariff wars or appeals to the Imperial authorities. The pity is that they should not have done their consulting first and their quarrelling afterwards. As to the still more important question of political union, which is understood to be in the background, the delegates of course had no power to deal with it in any authoritative way. It is, nevertheless, very likely that it was talked about in an informal way. Rumour has it that the question is to be submitted by plebiscite to the people of Newfoundland. This would be an eminently sensible way to deal with it, so far as the island is concerned, at the proper time, and under proper conditions. But the submission of such a question to popular vote involves the prior necessity that there be definite proposals to submit. It would be useless to ask any intelligent people to vote "yea" or "nay" upon the mere general question whether they were willing to enter the Canadian Confederation or not. The practical matter of terms and conditions would at once suggest itself, since many who might be willing and glad to unite on certain terms might be equally ready to object to do so under other conditions. Then, again, it would be equally necessary to know beforehand that the terms proposed were such as would be acceptable to the Dominion, otherwise the plebiscite might be a waste of time. As the Colony of Newfoundland is unquestionably poor, the finding of a mutually satisfactory pecuniary basis may be a matter of no little difficulty. But a matter of still greater moment is the French Shore difficulty, and it may well be questioned whether it would not be very unwise for Canada to consent to the union on any terms until some definite and permanent settlement of that question has been reached by the British and French Governments.

MR. McNEILL, M.P. for North Bruce, is lecturing in England in favour of preferential trade between Canada and the Mother Country. It may be assumed that his addresses are all similar in substance to that delivered a few weeks ago before the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce. This speech was an able and courageous one. We cannot but admire the skill with which he made the most of a weak case. We say "weak" advisedly, for surely the Canadian who goes before an assembly of the business men of England and seeks to convince them that it is not enough that the Mother Country should give Canada free admission to her markets, while her own products are met in return on the Canadian threshold with a high tariff, but that she should go further and purchase some more or less slight reduction of this tariff by taxing the food of her own people whenever it comes, as the greater part of it must come for many years at least, from foreign countries, must feel that he has anything but an easy task before him. What, then, are the inducements with which Mr. McNeill hopes to persuade the people of England to abandon the cherished fiscal policy under which her foreign commerce, exclusive of bullion and specie, increased from 665 to more than 3,700 millions of dollars in less than half-a-century, betokening an increase of wealth and prosperity which probably was never paralleled in the history of any nation, certainly never in that of any nation in which the conditions were anything like equal? These inducements—and we may be sure that our enthusiastic representative made the most of them—are, the hope of compelling a reduction in foreign tariffs, the courageous assumption that the price of breadstuffs would not be thereby increased to the British consumer, the more rapid building up and development of the great colonial empire, and the averting of the danger that Canada may be led to cast in her lot with the United States by reason of the "terrible strain" to which her loyalty is being subjected