

agreement to respect each other's territorial rights it is hard to conceive of any very considerable cordiality between two nations, which represent, as these do, the extremes of personal government and democratic freedom.

The New Conservative
Leader.

The speech delivered in London a few days since by Mr. Marter, Mr. Meredith's successor in the leadership of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature, was naturally awaited with a good deal of curiosity and interest. While commendable for its straightforwardness, and not lacking in cleverness, the speech did certainly leave too much room for the criticism of opponents, that it was deficient in the very respect in which it should have been full, viz., in regard to the policy of the Opposition under Mr. Marter's leadership. Hearers and readers naturally wished to know somewhat definitely for what specific reforms Mr. Marter and his Party chiefly stand. It is true that a shrewd Opposition leader can scarcely be expected to take the public into his confidence with regard to the details of his future administration, should he succeed in reaching the treasury benches. But there are certain great lines of policy in regard to which one would like to know whether anything, and if so what, is to be gained by the success of the party. To take a single question, more for the sake of illustration than because we suppose that electors can yet be brought to regard it as of the first importance, what would Mr. Marter do with the Public School system should the reins be placed in his hands? Does he propose to cut the connection between party politics and the management of the educational interests of the Province? In other words, will he take the work of public education out of the hands of a party, and so almost necessarily partisan, minister, and place it in the control of a superintendent or Board, as free as possible from party prejudices? The Minister of Education openly claims that the system is the best in the world, text-book methods included. Does the new Leader hold that view, or does he propose to go back to the old plan of a Board of Education? This question is, in the eyes of many, of prime importance. Is there any reason why Mr. Marter and his advisers should not have their minds made up and make a definite announcement?

The Manitoba School
Question.

In answer to a communication addressed to it by the Dominion Government, the Government of Manitoba recently issued a state paper, the gist of which is contained in the following words: "No citizen of the Provinces has any justification, in fact, for claiming that he has not the same rights and the same privileges respecting education that any other citizen possesses. . . . The statement that Catholic people are compelled to pay for the education of Protestant children creates a false impression. The law is not responsible for any such effect. The correct statement of fact is that . . . all taxable property is assessed for public school purposes, and all citizens have the same right to make use of the schools." Mr. John S. Ewart, the doughty champion of Separate Schools for Manitoba, now publishes a letter replying to this reply. This letter, being probably as good a case as can be made out by a clever lawyer who has made it his business to study the question from the point of view of the Roman Catholic prelates, is worth careful reading by those who wish to get a clear view of both sides of this perplexing question. The letter is largely made up of citations of cases in which injustice has been defended on grounds which the writer assumes to be similar to those on which the Manitoba Government rests. As the whole force of such reasoning depends upon the question whether the cases are really parallel, and as this parallelism has not, in this instance,

been proved, and cannot be taken for granted, this part of the letter may be passed over. The substance of the part which is really argumentative may not unfairly, we think, be summed up in two propositions: First—The Manitoba schools, as now constituted, are not unsectarian; there is, in fact, no such thing as unsectarian religion. Second—In order to be unsectarian the public schools would have to be secular, and as such would be most unacceptable to Roman Catholics, who believe that education should be, first of all, and above all, religious.

These Arguments Prove
too Much.

Accept, for the sake of the argument, Mr. Ewart's first position as established. Grant that there can be no religious teaching which is not sectarian, that those who believe in the possibility of unsectarian religion cannot produce even an unsectarian version of the decalogue, and what follows? Evidently we are confronted with a dilemma. We have to choose between sectarian schools and schools strictly secular. Accepting the Catholic view, as stated in the second proposition and conjoining it with the first, we are shut up to the conclusion, that not only the Catholics, but all other sectarian bodies of every name, have a right, each to its own sectarian school, at the public expense. This is a clear case of reduction to the absurd. If there is any other way out of the difficulty it is either that the State has the right to decide between the sects, declare what the true religion is, and order it and it alone to be taught in the schools, or that there should be no public schools. It is unnecessary to add that either proposal would be scouted in Canada. We may add that Mr. Ewart's reasoning seems to us to be logical and conclusive, if we accept the Roman Catholic premises. We have before pointed out that neither purely secular schools, nor schools in which the religious teaching is not distinctly Catholic, can possibly meet their views. To multiply sectarian schools until there should be a separate school not only for each sect of Christian, but for Jews, Agnostics, Atheists, etc., would be, of course, impossible, apart from the manifest absurdity involved in the Government paying from the public funds for the teaching of the most antagonistic creeds. To decide in favour of no public schools, and no school taxes, would be to turn the wheels of civilization backward. What practicable course, then, is left, but the secular school for mental and moral training, leaving the teaching of dogmas to the sects which respectively hold them?

The Civic Investi-
gation.

It can hardly be denied that the first stage of the investigation by Judge McDougall into the alleged attempts at contract-selling by some of the aldermen of this city, has amply justified the inquiry. Though the contents of the Judge's report are not known at the date of this writing, few who took the trouble to hear or read the evidence produced will have much doubt as to what the substance of that report will be. It is further scarcely conceivable that the Council, if it cares at all for its good name, will hesitate to grant the Judge the fuller powers for which he has intimated his intention to ask. Every honest member of the Council is liable, as the matter now stands, to become an object of suspicion. So manifestly is it in the interest of every alderman whose conscience is clear that the fullest investigation be made, that any councillor who should oppose the granting of the extension of power asked, would make himself immediately a suspected man. It is humiliating to citizens to have such an inquiry going on, and the damaging facts as brought out heralded far and wide, by wire and press. But it would be still more humiliating to all such to have the inquiry hushed, the guilty unpunished, and the innocent suspected. Next to choosing as councillors only men