

nonsense is talked. His political purity is unquestioned ; so are his private virtues ; but it is idle to deny the forfeiture of respect entailed by his conduct in the Riel affair and by the transparently fictitious pleas which he stooped to put forward on that occasion. It is not unlikely that in this case also he was led astray partly by his habit of speaking from a brief, the responsibility for the statements in which rests not on the advocate but on the client. What is his policy ? Nobody knows, though from time to time he appears to cast back a wistful yet irresolute glance upon the programme of the Aurora Speech. The great issue at the next election will be financial and commercial. But financial and commercial questions are precisely those to which least attention has been paid by Mr. Blake. About the National Policy he wavered long, seemed at last to have embraced Revenue Tariff, and then in his Malvern Speech on the very eve of battle, half-hauled down his colours, with the inevitable result of disheartening his own ranks, while he drew not a single deserter from those of the enemy. His personal leaning, so far as can be discerned, is to a junction with Sir John Thompson, while the action of his chief confidant indicates a continued craving for the fatal alliance with the Nationalists and Ultramontanes of Quebec. When a man of great promise has failed there is a natural desire to give him a second trial ; but the sympathy which is bestowed on the unfortunate general must be extended to the unfortunate army. It is difficult to believe that under such a leader the Liberals can hope to turn total defeat into victory.

The ambiguity of that part of Mr. Blake's letter which relates to himself necessarily extends to the part which relates to Mr. Laurier. Mr. Blake may mean that he wishes Mr. Laurier to be definitively accepted and heartily supported as the leader, or he may mean only that the time for taking out the warming-pan has not yet come. If he means the first he has great difficulties to surmount. He can hardly disguise from himself the fact that though, owing mainly to the advantages attending a long possession of power combined with the personal weak-