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THE election in Richelieu, to fill the vacancy in the House of Commons created by the death of Captain Labelle, was warmly contested. The Conservative candidate, Mr. Massue, has defeated his opponent, Mr. Beauchemin, by a majority of considerably more than three hundred. The majority of Mr. Labelle, the late member, who was also a Conservative, was but fifty-eight, in 1887. It is very difficult to estimate, with any degree of exactness, the political significance of this result. The most important question before the country is undoubtedly that of Unrestricted Reciprocity with the United States, which is now avowedly the one plank of the Liberal platform. That this issue was put clearly before the electors we cannot doubt, as Mr. Laurier himself addressed the people of the constituency, and *La Patrie* put forward this clause of the Leader's programme as one which should, of itself, be sufficient to determine the decision of the electors, seeing that they are, geographically, in direct communication with the United States. If there were reason to believe that the attention of the voters had been largely occupied with this question, the inference which is being drawn by the Conservative press as to the attitude that will be taken by the French-Canadian farmers in regard to it at the next election would have much plausibility. As both candidates posed as "nationalists," it is scarcely probable that the race feeling can have had much to do with deciding the issue, though it is possible that Mr. Laurier's recent declaration that he does not wish to see a distinct French-Canadian nation on the banks of the St. Lawrence may have told against him. As usual, charges of wholesale bribery are being made by the representatives of the defeated party. Unhappily, there is reason to fear that there may be much truth in them. We have little doubt, however, that to that more subtle and even more dangerous form of corruption, to which we have referred on previous occasions, a form which only those in power can use, and which consists in promises, more or less vague, that large sums of money will be spent in public works and buildings within the constituency, was in this, as it has been in many other cases, the chief force employed in bringing to the Government its largely increased majority.

It is worthy of serious consideration whether the law should not declare it a corrupt act on the part of any candidate, or other person speaking on his behalf, to promise, or even hint, at such a use of public funds as a reward or result of the return of a certain candidate. No more effective agency for corrupting and demoralizing whole constituencies and undermining representative institutions can be conceived of. It should be added that, however wide of the mark may be the guess of an Opposition journal, not less than one thousand unregistered voters were deprived of their franchise in consequence of the election being held upon the unrevised lists, the fact itself was an injustice and a hardship, against which the disfranchised voters of both parties have a right to protest.

THE letter of Mr. F. Beverley Robertson in the last number of THE WEEK will serve to remove an erroneous impression which has widely prevailed with reference to the position of the Separate Schools in Manitoba. The mistake has arisen from neglecting to note the relative dates of the passing of the Manitoba Act and the establishment of the Public School system of that Province. Accepting, as we may no doubt safely do, Mr. Robertson's explanation of the state of affairs, it will be seen that the course of the Provincial Government and Legislature, touching the proposed reforms, is very clear and their right to deal with the matter indisputable. The only way, so far as appears, in which the Dominion Government or Parliament could interfere with the proposed action would be the disallowance by the former, or a resolution by the latter in favour of disallowance, of any legislation which may be passed by the Manitoba Legislature. But the clear precedents already established in the rejection of Col. O'Brien's motion, and, earlier, in the case of the New Brunswick School Bill, make any such action morally impossible. Not only are the constitutional positions of Manitoba and New Brunswick identically the same, as Mr. Robertson points out, but the argument against Dominion interference is even stronger in the case of the latter, in view of the fact that Catholic Schools, in some respects resembling Separate Schools, were *de facto* in existence in New Brunswick prior to the passing of the B. N. A. Act. Any Act that the Manitoba Legislature may pass for the re-modelling of its Public School System will, therefore, be practically unassailable. The real struggle, if there be one, in Parliament will take place over Mr. Dalton McCarthy's resolution to do away with the dual-language and Separate School systems in the Northwest Territory. But this Territory must very soon be organized as a province, and it would be intolerable that the new Province, or Provinces, to be created should be placed in a worse position than Manitoba, and saddled with a burden which the latter has found too heavy to bear.

THE announcement that Mr. Anderson, of London, has "cabled that his Company has been obliged to cancel the contract (for a swift Ocean Steamship Service) for certain reasons which would be communicated to the Government by letter," will have caused, we doubt not, a widespread feeling of disappointment throughout Canada. Pending the receipt of the communication promised it may be pretty safely assumed that the reasons alluded to are mainly financial. The Company has no doubt been unable to find the very large amount of capital necessary to enable it to go on with its stupendous undertaking. To what extent this result is attributable to the very high rate of speed stipulated for remains to be seen. It was urged during the Parliamentary debate that the general interests of the proposed service could be much better served by a class of steamships pledged to a considerable lower rate of speed, and capable, as they might in consequence be made, of carrying much larger cargoes. This is, to say the least, doubtful. The question is, we think, one of passengers rather than of freight, and if so, one of speed rather than of carrying capacity. Time is, in the calculations of many, the most important element in modern travel. The chief inducement Canada has to offer in favour of the new route is a saving of time. Let it be made clear that no important advantage is to be had in this particular, that the gain in shortness and directness is to be counterbalanced by a lower rate of speed, and the prospects of success in the effort to

divert any considerable part of the currents of travel between Europe and the East to the Canadian trans-continental line will be seriously diminished. The failure of the Messrs. Anderson to carry out their agreement need not, we suppose, preclude the Government from entering into agreement with some other Company, but it certainly will very greatly lessen the prospects of success. What one strong Company has failed to do others will be chary of attempting. Perhaps the Dominion will not be the loser in the end. It may be just as well and a little wiser to wait a while and see whereunto these strenuous attempts to increase speed on the ocean will grow, and what will be their outcome, especially as Canada has just now a good many uses for all her half-millions of dollars.

THE Minister of Education has lost no time in adopting measures for the correction of the defects and abuses found to exist in the French schools of the border townships. His instructions, based on the Report of the Special Commission, provide for the holding annually of Teachers' Institutes similar to the one held a few weeks ago, for the help of young and inexperienced teachers. Model Schools in counties where there is a scarcity of teachers qualified to teach English, are to have two sessions per year instead of one. A series of bi-lingual readers has been adopted for use in the lower forms. A rigid rule is laid down to secure the discontinuance of all unauthorized text-books, and to enforce the exclusive use of those prescribed by the Department, and Inspectors are specially instructed to enforce the regulations in this respect. On the whole, the Education Department is to be congratulated on the promptness it has displayed in dealing with the matter. It is not easy to see that much more could be done than is now proposed, in order to improve the character of the teaching, and especially of the teaching of English in the schools in question. A service has been rendered, both to the Department and to the public, by those journals which, with whatever motive, so persistently directed attention to the state of things which it is now sought to remedy. At the same time the Department has done well in avoiding the harsh and impracticable measures advocated by some extremists. Constant vigilance will be demanded for years to come, in order to ensure that the regulations now prescribed be honestly and persistently enforced.

IT has for some time past been understood that the Ontario Government had proceeded so far in the difficult and delicate task of deciding upon the relative merits of the large number of candidates for the chair of Metaphysics and Ethics in the University of Toronto, as to have reduced to two the names retained for special consideration. It is now announced that the question as between these two has been decided by the easy and agreeable method of appointing both. The extent and importance of the subjects are certainly sufficient to tax the energies of two of the very ablest instructors, and the friends of Toronto University will be delighted to infer that the state of the finances is such as to admit of the double appointment. The claims of Dr. Baldwin have already been referred to in these columns. He has achieved a reputation as teacher, as well as student and author, such as, if we may trust to testimonials, is amply sufficient to justify his choice for this very important position. In regard to the young gentleman who is to be his coadjutor, it can only be said that the Government could hardly have given ampler evidence of their confidence in his abilities. The appointment to so responsible a chair of one who, however distinguished as a student, has had no experience as a teacher, must, we feel sure, be interpreted as a special tribute to the qualities of the individual, and not as indicating any disposition on the part of the authorities concerned to undervalue pedagogical or professional as distinct from mere scholarly qualifications. The compliment paid to Mr. Hume is certainly a very high one, if it be not absolutely unique in some of its features. The fact must be very gratifying to him and his friends. It is, in our estimation, a merit rather than a defect in the proposed arrangement that the two professors are not unlikely to represent two contrasted if not antagonistic schools of thought. We are not sure that it might not be well if it were oftener the case that