result now attained by the failure of the supposed constitutional safeguard of the denominational schools.

HUMAN justice is proverbially both halt and dim-sighted. The recent case in which the Supreme Court of the State of New York divided on a question of the first importance on the lines of the party affiliations of its members before their elevation to that high judicial position, is not without its parallels in recent Canadian history. Some of the papers of the Province of Quebec are just now denouncing in scathing terms what they allege to be instances of partisan procedures and judgments on the part of the judiciary of that Province. Granting that there may be, as undoubtedly there often are, good grounds for such complaint, it is by no means necessary to assume bad faith or deliberate perversion of justice on the part of the judges whose decisions are thus biased. They may be and probably in most cases are perfectly honest and conscientious, or at least persuade themselves that they are so. It is as impossible to put aside in a moment, or at will, the predilections and habits of thought of years, or of a lifetime, as it would be to change as quickly the facial expressions which are to a considerable extent the product of the dominant thoughts and feelings. Such cases simply illustrate the difficulties under which society as at present constituted labours in its efforts to secure any approach to ideal justice, even in its highest courts of judicature. Still more painful illustrations of a somewhat different character abound in the surprising inequalities which are found to exist in the severity of the sentences pronounced by different justices, as related to the turpitude of the offences of which the respective culprits have been convicted. The brute in human form who strangles his own child, or kidnaps and outrages a defenceless woman, will receive at the hands of one judge a milder sentence than will be passed by another, or possibly by the same, upon the poor wretch who steals a horse or commits a burglary. The frequency of such inequalities in the administration of justice suggests an interesting subject of enquiry for the student of social science or psychology. It is not unlikely that they might be traced in many instances to the traditionary survivals of the old days when the laws were made exclusively by the patrician and property-holding classes, in whose eyes an offence against the rights of property of one of their own class was far more heinous than one affecting only the comparatively worthless persons or lives of their plebeian serfs; or of the still remoter times when the head of the family had sovereign authority, even to the power of life and death, over the members of his own household. It would not, in fact, be difficult to show that society is to-day often seriously hampered in its efforts to correct glaring abuses and promote much-needed reforms by the manner in which its hands are tied by a too scrupulous regard to the doctrine of the supreme rights of husbands and parents in respect to wives and children, long after the individuals concerned have forfeited all just claims to be considered fit to exercise such authority.

AKIN to the subject of the above comments is that somewhat singular feature of our criminal laws which makes the guilt and punishment of a criminal dependent to a certain extent upon what, for want of a better term, we may call the accidental consequences of his crime. We read the other day a short story in which the chief actor is made, in a paroxysm of jealousy, to stab, and as he believed kill, his betrothed. After days of the most excruciating mental torture he is finally driven by the agonies of remorse to surrender himself to an officer, from whom he learns that his supposed victim instead of being dead was but slightly injured and has already recovered. We can fully understand and sympathize with the reaction in the mind of the lover. That which is pertinent to our purpose is the terms in which the officer is described as making the announcement: "You are not a murderer." Cases somewhat similar are not uncommon in real life. At least one such is just now before us in Western Ontario. The murderer of detective Phair, of London, will shortly be placed on trial on a charge conviction for which will mean death. Had the fatal bullet or bullets deviated an inch or two from their course, or had the skill of surgeons and physicians been successful in averting fatal consequences, even though the wounded man were disabled for life, the doer of the dastardly deed could not have been put on trial for murder and his life would not have been forfeited or in danger. Yet it is perfectly obvious that his crime and guilt would not have been changed in the slightest degree by the recovery of his victim. If it be said that the human law and its human executors do not attempt to deal out ideal justice, or, in other words, to punish guilt, but only to deter from the commission of crime, the objection still holds. There would have been exactly the same necessity for a stern example by way of warning had the assassin's victim survived his wounds, that there now is. Some will admit the force of the objection, but say that the logical distinction is unavoidable, inasmuch as all are agreed that nothing short of actual murder should be punished with death, and that where death does not ensue there can be no murder. A little further reflection will, perhaps, show that in thus reasoning we cheat ourselves by means of the words we use, and that if the punishment were made contingent solely upon the intention of the culprit, as proved by his act, without reference to the results of that act, and the legal terms used were chosen in accordance with that view of guilt, the chief force of the objection would disappear. We point out these various imperfections in our judicial methods for the purpose of asking whether, since their existence can scarcely be denied, they should not as far as possible be remedied. There can be no doubt in the mind of the thoughtful student of history and of human nature that the deterrent effect of the operation of the criminal laws depends quite as much upon the popular impression with regard to the uniformity and impartiality with which they are executed, as upon belief in their abstract justice. Is it not, then, time (to specify a single case of possible reform) that it should be enacted that no criminal sentence beyond a certain limited degree of severity shall be pronounced by a single judge. We can readily believe that it would be a great relief to the judge who feels himself called upon to sentence a convict to death or to a long term of imprisonment, to have his responsibility shared by a brother justice. It would surely be more worthy of our free institutions and would better subserve the ends of justice were our legislators to set about providing as far as in their power against the possibility of such inequalities as those to which we have referred, than to have the judges themselves threatening, as they are now doing in Quebec, to muzzle the press and people so as to prevent unfavourable comment upon their conduct and decisions? The day is past or is rapidly passing when even the ermine can be permitted to shield a public officer from criticism.

SO important an event as a general election in one of the Provinces of the Dominion might be expected to afford material for general comment, but the issues involved in the election which has just been held in New Brunswick were either so purely personal and local, or so ill-understood at this distance from the scene, that there seems to have been no reason for a preference on general principles or even on sentimental grounds. If it could be clearly shown that the dissolution was sprung on the Province, as the Opposition contend, in order to save the Government from the necessity of facing an investigation arising out of a charge of corrupt practices, or, in current phrase, of "boodling," a cause for preference would at once present itself. But the information hitherto given to the public does not, so far as we are aware, make out a sufficiently strong case to warrant a conviction or even a strong opinion upon that point. Moreover, it does not necessarily follow, so far as we can see, that the success of the Government, which has a majority of twelve or thirteen, can prevent an investigation being had, provided sufficient reason can be shown for it. The ostensible cause put forth by the Government for dissolving the House so long before the expiration of its term, viz., the abolition of the Legislative Council, which, in accordance with an Act of the House, came to an end with the dissolution, is plausible, but is open to the objection that the same reason was equally valid in favour of a general election immediately after the passing of that Act, a year or more ago. The probability is that Premier Blair and his Cabinet acted on the pernicious principle which has now become the common practice with both local and Dominion Governments —that of seizing the time deemed most favourable for the triumph of the Government to bring on a general election. Meanwhile the abolition of the useless and expensive second chamber is a sensible movement and an example which the other Maritime Provinces will probably be not slow to follow, if it results in no immediate disaster in this instance. When the sister Provinces have tasted the benefits of this retrenchment, they may be better prepared for the next wise step, that of union in a single Province with a single chamber. The success which has attended the single-chamber system in Ontario and Manitoba should re-assure any who may fear to trust all their legislation to their own direct representatives.

TWO utterances of the Hon. Mr. Chapleau, in his speech a few days since at the Hochelaga nomination, have naturally given rise to a good deal of speculation. The one was touching the Manitoba school question; the other had reference to his own future and that of his colleague, Hon. Mr. Ouimet. In regard to the first topic his words, which he has since admitted to have been correctly reported, were in part as follows:—

If the Government does not meet in the Legislature that spirit of tolerance which the Church recognizes to-day under all the forms which Christianity has adopted; if the old Provinces which created Confederation refuse to draw inspiration at those living springs which have given them existence and durability; if in the name of equal rights they refuse equal justice and liberty of conscience to those who demand it, then it is as well to place everything in question again and to discuss from the beginning the terms of union, which can make a great nation out of the heterogeneous elements of our Provinces only on condition of giving to the minorities the guarantee of rights, privileges, immunities, without which these minorities would never have accepted the agreement which constitutes Confederation.

These words, while sufficiently indefinite to be oracular, can hardly be taken otherwise, if they be taken seriously at all, than as either foreshadowing remedial legislation on the part of the Government, or indicating a design on the part of the orator to commit his successor in the Quebec leadership to the advocacy of such a policy. The latter suspicion is rendered possible by the other part of his speech, in which he seemed to intimate his own early retirement and the falling of his mantle upon Mr. Ouimet. It is true that Mr. Chapleau has since told the correspondents that his words in this case have been misunderstood, and that he did not mean it to be inferred that his own early retirement had been decided upon. Everything, he says, depends upon the state of his health, which seems to be really precarious. But even this explanation does not materially modify the original interpretation. Putting the two sayings together, and combining with them his assurance that the Cabinet is united, it seems difficult to avoid one of two conclusions, viz., either that the Government has already resolved to attempt remedial legislation of some kind, or that Mr. Chapleau desires to put either the Government or his successor in the Quebec leadership, and consequently the Quebec members, in such a position as will compel them to take a stand in favour of such legislation. The one supposition seems well nigh incredible, the others distinctly uncomplimentary and unkind to Mr. Chapleau.

OPINION in financial circles in the United States is just now divided between two proposals for the future provision and management of a "circulating medium," some financiers advocating the issuance of a national currency, others recurrence to a system of State banks. We do not feel called upon to decide the question for them, or to tender any advice in the matter. But we can scarcely help feeling a little envious when we consider the cause which makes it necessary for our neighbours in the near future to abandon their present system which has certainly worked well, and adopt a new one. Under the present system, as our readers are aware, a National bank is required to purchase bonds of the United States Government in open market and deposit these with the Treasury Department in return for the bank notes which it receives and issues, the bonds in the Treasury thus furnishing adequate security for the holder of the notes in case of failure of the bank. The necessity of discontinuing this system arises from the fact that the national debt is being paid off so fast that there will not much longer be any Government bonds in the market to be bought. When will the equivalent of such a state of things exist in Canada?

IT is fortunate for the United States that while it has the great negro problem before it still unsolved, it has at last, after long years of shameless injustice and cruelty, entered upon what bids fair to prove a just and merciful solution of the Indian problem. The Lake Mohonk Conference, which is an annual assembling of philanthropists of all classes, to discuss the condition of the Indians and devise measures for their protection and civilization, has this year found both its duties and its perplexities very greatly lessened. The new system, which was largely of