

only 47 years of age makes it not improbable that, had his life been prolonged, he might have yet taken a still higher position in the Provincial, or possibly in the Dominion Parliament, as every year was contributing to his political education and disciplining his really fine powers. His loss of office a few years since was undoubtedly due to excessive party loyalty, or, more exactly, to excessive loyalty to Sir John A. Macdonald. It is unnecessary to repeat the familiar story of his fall, caused by his lack of courage or determination to stand by the people of his Province in opposition to Sir John in their demand for the abolition of the railway monopoly which was checking the growth and prosperity of the Province. The manner in which that which was refused to Mr. Norquay's friendly solicitation was promptly granted to the uncompromising and menacing demand of his successors in office, is one of the strangest chapters in Ottawa parliamentary history, and conveys a lesson worth conning to all leaders who may be tempted to sacrifice the weal of the people they represent, either to a weak expediency, or to party loyalty.

CERTAIN paragraphs have of late been going the rounds of the press to the effect that the intermarriage of deaf mutes was likely to result, in the near future, in a deaf-mute variety of the human race. This somewhat alarming theory does not, so far as we are aware, rest on any basis of ascertained facts, but it seems sufficiently in accord with what has been observed of the tendency to the reproduction of other congenital defects by heredity, to make the matter worthy of serious investigation. We are glad therefore, to observe that Mr. R. Mathison, Superintendent of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Belleville, is instituting an inquiry with a view to ascertaining all the facts available bearing on the subject. Mr. Mathison will take it as a special favour if any reader who may know of any married deaf-mute persons, with or without children, will kindly send him their addresses. The inquiry is one which should be carefully prosecuted in the public interest. Up to this date Mr. Mathison has been able to learn of but one deaf child in Ontario whose parents are deaf and dumb. Of the hundreds of deaf-mute children who are now attending, or have attended the institution over which he presides, there is, he informs us, not one congenitally deaf who has deaf-mute parents. So far evidence in support of the theory of a tendency to the hereditary transmission of this deplorable defect seems utterly lacking. But whether uneducated deaf-mutes are in the habit of inter-marrying, or whether the children of such marriages would be at all likely to find their way to the Belleville institution, we have no means of knowing. The question now propounded by Mr. Mathison is invested with a double interest, having a scientific as well as a practical bearing. No doubt his conclusions will ultimately be given to the public.

IN the circular referred to in the foregoing paragraph Mr. Mathison calls attention to another matter which is of the greatest possible interest to all that most unfortunate class for whose education the institution over which he presides is established, and to their parents and friends. There may be many parents or guardians of deaf-mute children in Ontario who do not know that there is an institution at Belleville in which deaf children between the ages of seven and twenty are educated and boarded at the expense of the Province. It is only required that the child be of sound mind, and that the parents, or the municipality if the parents are unable, pay the railroad fare and provide the necessary clothing. The interests of humanity, as well as of public policy, demand that no deaf child shall be permitted to grow up in the Province without education. It is hardly too much to say, as Mr. Mathison does, that the condition of an uneducated deaf-mute is more deplorable than that of any other human being. Life under such circumstances can only be a burden to the individual and to all about him. Any one who happens to know of such a case—and doubtless there are many such—may confer a life-long blessing upon all concerned by inducing the friends of the child to take advantage of this liberal provision made by the Government. Application papers and any information needed may be had by writing to the Superintendent at Belleville.

THE reply of Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary, to the memorial of the Committee of the Protestant Alliance, asking for the disallowance of the Jesuits' Estates Act, states clearly that "the allowance or disallowance of the Acts of the Provincial Legislatures of the Dominion of Canada is a matter which rests entirely with the Governor-

General, acting on the advice of his responsible Ministers." This is, it seems to us, the only answer that could have reasonably been given or expected. In fact, so far as we can see, it is the only one that could have been acceptable to the people of the Dominion or of any of its Provinces. The people of Canada have received from the Imperial authorities a federal constitution, which was asked for and framed by themselves. According to that constitution the Governor-General and his responsible Ministers are the constituted and the only constituted medium of connection between the United Provinces and the Imperial Government. For the Colonial Secretary to step in and disallow an Act of one of the Provincial Legislatures would be a violation of the federal constitution, and a distinct interference with the rights and powers of both the Federal and the Provincial Governments. Both of these would be ready enough to resent such an interference on ordinary occasions. If the constitution which we have made for ourselves and which the Mother country has enacted and sanctioned, does not suit us, it can, no doubt, be changed at the request of the majority. But so long as it exists it is the supreme law of the Confederation. Even should the Home Government regard some Act of a Provincial Legislature as in violation of Imperial law, or of the rights of the Crown, it is clear from the general tenor of the Federation Act, as well as from the principle laid down by the Colonial Secretary, that the British Government could not directly interfere with the operation of that Act. It could do so only through the Governor-General and his responsible Ministers. Ought not Canadians to be proud and glad that it is so? It is surely enough for the Provinces to be accountable to one master. Two would be one too many.

A FUNDAMENTAL principle of great moment in the new Prison Act of New York State is the adoption of the indeterminate sentence. Henceforth, whenever a male over sixteen is convicted of a State-prison offence punishable for a term to be fixed by the court between maximum and minimum limits, the sentence shall be for an indeterminate period within those limits. For example, a certain felony is now punishable by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than ten years. Prior to the passage of this Act the Court had to specify the precise number of years of confinement. It will do so no longer, but will adopt the language of the statute, and sentence the felon "for not less than two nor more than ten years." The precise limit is eventually determined by a Board, composed of the Superintendent of State Prisons, the warden, the chaplain, the physician, and the principal keeper. The record, or "biographical sketch" of the prisoner, which is to be fully and carefully kept, will be the basis of the Board's action. When this record is satisfactory the prisoner who has served his minimum term may, on personal application to the Board, be released on parole. This is interpreted by the *Nation* to mean that he shall no longer be imprisoned, but shall remain in the legal custody of the warden until the expiration of the maximum period of his sentence, or until he is absolutely discharged. Just what is meant by this legal custody, or how it is to be enforced does not clearly appear in the article before us, but is, no doubt, defined in the Act. If there is reasonable cause to believe that the paroled prisoner has lapsed or is about to lapse into criminal ways or company, any member of the Board may re-arrest him and imprison him for the period of his unexpired maximum term. Any paroled prisoner may be absolutely discharged by the Board. The operation of some of the foregoing wise regulations may be to some extent hindered by certain clauses which were incorporated in the Act through the influence of those who so greatly dread the competition of convict with free labour. For instance, the employment of prisoners in certain lines of industry, such as the manufacture of stoves, iron, hollow-ware, and boots and shoes, is absolutely prohibited in the penitentiaries, reformatories and houses of correction, and prohibited beyond certain limits in the State prisons. The provision that full market rates are to be obtained on all sales, and that no products are to be sold for less than ten per cent. above the cost of the materials, are on the other hand, it strikes us, reasonable and salutary. On the whole this New York Act is the boldest attempt at the application of prison-reform principles in penal institutions which has yet been made on this continent, and its operation will be watched with great interest.

AFTER some absurd fluctuations between extremes the New York State Legislature has at length succeeded in putting on the statute book a new Prison Law which contains some excellent provisions. Though not all that

the prison reformers could have wished for in every respect, the Act is of such a kind as puts the prison system of the State of New York in advance of that of any other State in the Union. First, and perhaps best, in the reforms made by the new law is its provision for the classification of convicts. All prisoners are to be classified in three grades. In the first grade are placed all those appearing to be corrigible and likely to maintain themselves by honest industry after their discharge. The second grade includes the incorrigible, who are nevertheless able to work and reasonably obedient to prison discipline, while the totally incorrigible and refractory element falls into the third grade. Next, or equal in importance, are the arrangements for prison labour. The labour of the prisoners of the first grade is to be directed primarily to fitting them to maintain themselves by honest industry, even though no useful or salable product result from their labour; but, so far as is consistent with this primary object, productive industry is to be maintained. In the case of the second grade the order of these objects is reversed, regard being first had to the productiveness of the work. The labour of the third-grade prisoners is to be "directed solely to such exercise as shall tend to the preservation of health, or the manufacturing without the aid of machinery of such articles as are needed in the public institutions of the State, or such other manual labour as the Superintendent of State Prisons shall direct which shall not compete with free labour." This is, as the *Nation* pithily observes, "a concession to the feelings of those who cannot bear that the worst convicts should support themselves, but insist that free labourers shall support them." But as the class will, it is hoped, be small, the matter is of less importance. Every one who objects to placing human beings on a level with beasts of burden will be glad to know that the contract system is not to be restored. An innovation of considerable importance is the payment of wages—the amount of compensation not to exceed ten per cent. of the earnings of the institution in which they are confined—to well-behaved convicts.

COMMENTING on the adjournment of the Massachusetts' Legislature, the New York *Nation*, one of the most dispassionate and reliable of American journals, makes a humiliating admission. Not content with stating that it is generally agreed that this particular Legislative body has been "exceptionally disorderly, inefficient and corrupt," the *Nation* goes on to say: "In Massachusetts, as everywhere, the standard of the law-maker is steadily sinking, and nobody is as yet able to point out an effective method of bringing about a reform. But it is obvious something must be done, or our Legislatures will before long become insufferable." Whether it is intended to include the National Congress, or only the State Legislatures, in this sweeping condemnation is not quite clear. In any case it is a sad confession to be made after a century of trial. Much was hoped from the great Independent or "Mugwump" reaction of five years ago, but that seems, in part at least, to have collapsed. The only hope just now appears to be that based on the principle contained in the old adage, "When things are at the worst they begin to mend." There is, probably, as large a percentage of virtuous and honourable citizens in the United States as in any other country. The cause of the evil is largely in the political system which permits politics to be made a trade, and a profitable trade, by the unscrupulous. Some day, it may be hoped, public intelligence and indignation will be aroused and the trading politicians swept away in a storm of honest indignation.

WHAT are the exact ends of local and Imperial concern to be served by the recent slaughter of Dervishes on the banks of the Nile, has not yet been made clear. No doubt the reasons were satisfactory to the British Government, though, in view of the circumstances, a pretty rigid inquisition will probably be made in Parliament. Those circumstances seem as horrible as can well be conceived. The fact that the tactics resorted to are praised in the despatches as brilliant strategy, suggests some cynical, if not humiliating, reflections upon the usages of modern warfare. Certain practices are, we from time to time learn, condemned as inadmissible amongst civilized nations. Explosive bullets, poisoned missiles, and similar devices for increasing the fatality or pain of wounds, are tabooed with expressions of horror. The nation which should resort to them would be regarded as beyond the pale of civilization. But a British General—a representative of the army and the people who are supposed to occupy the very highest plane of Christian civilization in regard to all