

roads. Without attempting to fix the responsibility for this feeling, if unhappily it exists, we may observe that these incidents suggest the extent to which it is possible for two contiguous countries, situated as these are with reference to each other, to keep up a series of petty and in many cases of damaging annoyances, deplorable in themselves and dangerous by reason of their possible culmination. Obviously it is the part of good statesmanship to cultivate mutual friendship and goodwill by a spirit of forbearance and magnanimity, for evidence of which we search in vain, on either side of the line, during these last years. This moralizing is, however, by the way. It is clear that the only way out of the difficulty, so far as the quarantine is concerned, is to convince the British Government that their fears as to the existence of contagious disease among Canadian cattle are utterly groundless. So soon as that can be done the embargo will no doubt be removed. By the way, some of our protectionists must be curiously in want of a clod to hurl against British free-trade when they are driven to represent, as one or two have done, the scheduling of Canadian cattle as a measure of protection.

The report of the conference held last November between delegates representing the Canadian and Newfoundland Governments respectively, which was laid on the table of the House the other day, is not a little disappointing. Unless our memory is seriously at fault, the impression went abroad after the close of the conference that the interchange of views had been eminently friendly and satisfactory. This is by no means borne out by the record. On the contrary, so far as can be gathered from the document, the main questions in dispute between the two Governments were left in about the same condition in which they were found. The chief if not the only obstacle in the way of a friendly and mutually satisfactory arrangement was the refusal of the Dominion representatives to promise to withdraw their objections to the ratification of the Bond-Blaine Convention by the British Government, on any conditions save the free admission of Canadian fish to the markets of the United States, a condition which it is not, of course, in the power of Newfoundland to obtain or bestow. The Newfoundland delegates repeatedly pressed the question whether, in case of the ultimate failure of the Canadian Government to obtain the desired concession from Washington, after ample time had been had for negotiations, the said Government would not then permit her smaller sister to enjoy the benefits, which to her would be very great, of an arrangement which Canada herself was unable to effect. The answer of the Canadian delegates was a refusal to give any such pledge, and an intimation that the influence of their Government would continue to be exerted with that of Great Britain to prevent the ratification of the treaty in question.

We venture to ask, in all frankness, whether the Dominion is not pursuing a dog-in-the-manger policy unworthy of her, in this affair. The representatives of Newfoundland regard the treaty in question as one of the very first importance, almost vital in fact, to the well-being of their colony. No great skill in putting one's self in the place of one's neighbour is required to show us that were the circumstances reversed, such interference with

Canadian affairs by the Island would be deemed intolerable. Does the fact that Newfoundland is the smaller colony make her rights any smaller than ours? Can there be reasons of state so weighty as to over-balance all ordinary considerations of fair play, to justify such interference with the policy of a sister colony? In view of the manner in which the Canadian delegates pressed the question of union upon the attention of those of Newfoundland it will be by no means surprising should the latter and the people of Newfoundland generally infer that the action of Canada in the matter is, at least partly, an indirect pressure to force the Island to enter the Confederation. Canadians for obvious reasons should be the last to tolerate such pressure. Mr. Bowell even went so far as to represent the question as one of great moment to the Imperial Government, as in fact "to a great extent, a matter of Imperial necessity". It must be, we suppose, that Minister Bowell was authorized to make this statement, though it is certainly an unusual thing for the British Government to make known their views and wishes in respect to a Colony in so indirect a manner. The incident gives new force to the query as to what would be permitted to the Dominion, or expected of her, in case of federation with Newfoundland, in the delicate French-shore fishery business.

TARIFF REFORM.

With the delivery of the budget speech of the Minister of Finance, which will take place too late for comment in this issue, will no doubt commence one of the most important debates ever had in the Dominion Parliament. The tone and temper of the discussion will, of course, depend largely upon the policy of the Government, as announced by the Minister. Up to the present moment the secret has been well kept, and it would be useless to hazard a guess as to whether the policy will prove to be one of concession in some important respects to what may now be safely described as a wide-spread and growing popular demand for tariff reduction, or one of masterly procrastination such as has on other occasions stood the present Government, or rather its predecessor, in so good stead. It is hardly likely, we suppose that any serious changes will be proposed for the present session. It is evident, however, that some pretty definite promises for the future will be necessary to make sure of the continued adhesion of the tariff malcontents in the party ranks.

The progress of the debate will exhibit several interesting phases of opinion among the people's representatives. There will be, in the first place, the straight protectionists, who thoroughly believe in the underlying principle of the National Policy—not as it was originally proposed and adopted, as a measure of retaliation designed to compel our neighbours over the way to grant us reciprocal trade. The party has advanced far since Sir John Macdonald announced as the motto of the Party, "Reciprocity of trade or reciprocity of tariffs." It has climbed up from that stepping-stone to the high platform of protectionism, pure and simple. That which was devised as a means to an end has now come to be prized, if not strictly as an end in itself, at least as a means to another end, radically different from that at first proposed and quite inconsistent with it. We shall hear member

after member seriously contend that the true and only way in which to make a young and comparatively poor people strong and rich and great is to surround with a high tariff wall every article of commerce which can by any possibility be produced in the country. With a touching faith in the virtue of mutual taxation as a means of growth and prosperity, and a sovereign contempt for the natural right of every free citizen to buy what he needs wherever he can procure it to best advantage, the statesmen will arrange themselves in solid phalanx against every proposal to relieve the people of any considerable portion of the burden which they may foolishly believe to be crushing them to earth, while it is in reality, according to the philosophy of these law-makers, but developing their muscle and accelerating their progress. And we see no reason to doubt that the statesmen of this class will be in the majority to an extent that will make it safe, for the present at least, for the Government to adhere substantially to the old policy.

Diametrically opposed to these will be the small but growing band of those who emphatically deny the right of any Government, or any majority, to take away the inalienable right of free citizens to buy and sell and to use their own property as they please, and who regard it as injustice and robbery to force such citizens to purchase the products of certain of their fellow-citizens, at such prices as the latter may fix, on pain of being mulcted in a heavy fine for the privilege of purchasing elsewhere those which suit them better. To these it will be open not only to denounce protectionism in every form as an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject, but, to maintain, on the broadest grounds of political economy and of common-sense philosophy, the decree of beneficent and freedom-loving nature that the greatest good of the greatest number will be most surely promoted by the largest freedom of commercial intercourse. But the genuine free-traders will be in a decided though by no means hopeless minority, for the present, in the Canadian Parliament. They must console themselves with the reflection that time, and political science, and accumulating experience, are on their side.

But the issue may, in this case, be largely affected by a third body, which cannot be accurately described as a class, seeing that it lacks the cohesive force of a principle, and is but a conglomeration of individuals, having diverse views, seeking diverse ends, and held together only by the accidental bond of a common party loyalty, or a common self-interest. Some of these have had their eyes partially opened. They see men as trees walking. It will probably not be long till some of them will find peace and satisfaction in planting their feet firmly on the solid foundation of a sound economic principle. Others of them will have been led to take exception to various features of the National Policy as at present existing, while giving a general approval to it as a whole. Each one will object to the particular injustice or hardship which has come most directly under his own observation. One has discovered that it is a crying shame to pay farmers and other hard-working citizens to pay eighteen or twenty cents per gallon for an inferior quality of illuminating oil, when a superior article could be procured for less than half of the sum but for the tariff imposed to compel them to patronize a few oil-producers.