

national aspirations were cherished. The people of Great Britain themselves would think the less rather than the more of us if, with all our immense resources and opportunities, we were willing to remain in a perpetual state of colonial subordination. A well-known writer in *The Canada Presbyterian* has called in question the general assumption that "things cannot go on as they are." But what does the general unrest, the abounding discussion, the project of Imperial Federation itself, whose Canadian advocates are unquestionably among Her Majesty's most loyal subjects, mean, unless that the feeling is widespread and growing that things "cannot go on as they are"? We see no reason why loyalty to Great Britain may not be thoroughly consistent with loyalty to Canada, but the two terms do not and cannot mean the same thing. We do not believe that the better classes, either of British statesmen or of the British people, disapprove at heart the growing ambition of Canadians to have a nationality of their own, and to carve out a destiny for themselves. If in the achievement of this purpose—who can say it is an ignoble or disloyal purpose?—if any misunderstanding with the Mother Country should unhappily arise—Heaven avert the omen!—such misunderstanding is more likely to come from the blind and misguided super-loyalty of those whose sympathies are British without being Canadian, and who are disposed to belittle all purely Canadian characteristics and ambitions, than from any other cause.

MOST Canadians will be glad to learn that the Minister of Justice has been successful in inducing the British Government to sanction the Act by which the Dominion Parliament, two years since, abolished the right of appeal to Her Majesty's Privy Council in criminal cases. It appears, also, that a similar correspondence has taken place with regard to the right of Canada to pass the Copyright Act of last session. The latter issue is still undecided, but the correspondence in both cases is to be laid before the House. It will be interesting reading for more reasons than one. Members of Parliament and the public will be especially curious, we fancy, to know on what grounds the British Government's contention in the latter case can be supported, after the concession made in the former. One would suppose that if in anything Her Majesty's advisers would jealously guard the royal prerogative it would be in a matter involving the life or death of one of her subjects. Opponents of Sir John A. Macdonald's Administration, remembering the high ground taken by him at the time the Supreme Court Act was passed, will be curious to learn how the attitude of his Government in relation to these two matters can be harmonized with his position on that occasion. He and his supporters then, if our memory is not greatly at fault, when it was proposed to make the decisions of the Canadian Supreme Court final, strenuously maintained that such legislation would be *ultra vires*, since no Act of a colonial legislature could annul the Queen's prerogative, or take away the subject's right to carry his cause to the foot of the throne. It is still further very significant that from the time when Mr. Blake, as Minister of Justice, was successful in inducing the British Government to modify very materially the character of its instructions to the Governor-General, up to the present, the tendency of events has been steadily in the direction of an enlargement of Canadian powers of self-government and a corresponding curtailment of the Queen's prerogative. Is it not time that some of the ultra-Loyalists in the House and country were protesting against such a course? Else who can tell where this constant drifting in the direction of Independence may land us some of these days?

CONSIDERABLE comment has been caused by the following clause in the Act which Premier Mercier has introduced in the Quebec Legislature to amend the Election Law of that Province:

If, however, such corrupt practice was of such a trifling nature or of such trifling extent that the result of the election cannot have been affected by such act, whether alone or in connection with other illegal practices at such election, such corrupt practice shall not void the election.

The fact that this clause follows closely the line of a similar provision in the Ontario Act, having apparently the approval of both parties, does not, we suppose, absolutely prove that it is wise and in the interests of electoral purity, but it goes far to free Mr. Mercier from the charge of "trifling with honour, justice and common sense," which has been too hastily preferred against him by Ontario journals. There is much to be said in favour of making the consequences of an act of bribery, on how-

ever petty a scale, as serious as possible to the party which it was designed to benefit, provided there is any good reason to believe that the managers of that party were directly or tacitly privy to the act. But it is not easy to see that any just end is to be gained by putting candidate and constituency to the trouble and expense of a new election in consequence of an act committed by an individual, without the connivance or knowledge of the responsible managers of either party, so long as the act was too trivial to have affected to any appreciable extent the result of the election. Of that kind seems to have been the incident which has just now voided once more the Haldimand election. It would be much more logical and much more effective to visit the penalty upon the individuals giving and receiving the bribe, in some much sterner form than the imposition of a trifling fine. The act in the case of each is clearly a crime against the State, and should be punished as a criminal offence. This would have an educational and moral, as well as a deterrent effect, for the unreflecting classes take their ideas of right and wrong in such matters from the manner in which the given act is dealt with in law, to a much greater extent than we are apt to suppose. If Canadian legislators wish, in downright earnest, to crush out electoral corruption, they will not only amend their laws in this respect, but will also adopt the British method of fixing the limit of lawful expenses, and requiring sworn statements of expenditure from the responsible parties. The practice of bribery and trickery at elections is too deep-seated to be wholly eradicated in a generation. But we see no reason to doubt that if these two means of repression were added to those already in use, the evil would quickly be reduced to a minimum so small as to be comparatively harmless.

A POWERFUL opposition seems to have unexpectedly developed itself against the renewal by the United States Government, of the seal monopoly of the Alaska Company. Senator Plumb has introduced a bill providing that after the expiration of the present contract the sealing business shall be carried on under the direct supervision of Government officers, and that all seals caught be taken in the Government's revenue cutters to San Francisco, there to be sold in the open market to the highest bidder. He would also have the entire revenue from these seal fisheries devoted to the education of the Alaska natives. The proposal has secured much stronger backing than was anticipated even by its friends. The *Christian Union* says: "Senator Dawes pointed out that the present monopoly would be in no way injured if the Government increased the tax on each seal from \$2.62 to \$10. The Alaska Company controls more than half the seal rookeries of the world, and any addition which is made to the tax which it pays to the Government it can make to the price charged to consumers. Senator Plumb showed how the advertising for bids for the twenty years' lease was a pretence, since the Alaska Company was the only one in a position to put in a bid." He also pointed out the dangerous nature of the authority now given to the Secretary of the Treasury to fix the number of seals which the Company is permitted to take each year. Permission to take 30,000 or 40,000 more a year might be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Company. Unless the Government feels itself compelled to recede from the policy which it has been pursuing, it is likely that the influence of the Company will be too powerful to be resisted. It will be strange, nevertheless, while in some of the states the most stringent measures are being taken to crush out monopolies, to see the National Government perpetuating one of the most gigantic and exclusive of all monopolies. It would certainly facilitate withdrawal from the piratical policy which the Government has been pursuing in defence of the Alaska Company's monopoly, to have the control of the business directly in its own hands, and it is just possible that this may be the hidden meaning of that favour which Senator Plumb's bill has met.

WHETHER or not the Gladstonian programme is making the progress in England claimed for it by the Liberal opponents of the Government, there can be no doubt that Mr. Goschen's budget, if he is indeed able to show the expected £4,000,000 surplus, will be a tower of strength to Lord Salisbury's administration. There is, probably, no other member of a Government, the Premier himself only excepted, whose abilities can do so much to strengthen its hold upon the Commons and the country as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Salisbury is particularly fortunate, at the present juncture, in having in

this most responsible and difficult office the ablest financier who has occupied it since the incumbency of Gladstone himself. In this, as in most other cases, the favourable result is no doubt due more largely to causes over which the most brilliant finance minister has no control, than to Mr. Goschen's exceptional abilities, great as they unquestionably are. But it is one of the characteristics of democratic, as perhaps of all other constituencies, that they do not distinguish very nicely between the results of personal merits, and what we may, for want of a better phrase, call good luck on the part of a Cabinet Minister. Neither the people nor their representatives in Parliament are likely to be in haste, except for very urgent reasons, to dispense with the services of a Government which is in a position to restore to them in some shape a few millions of their taxes, instead of devising ways and means for increasing their amount. The task of disposing of the surplus so as to give the largest amount of general satisfaction is scarcely less difficult than that of securing it in a prosperous season. It seems to be taken for granted that the larger part of the sum will, in this case, be devoted to Free Education. If this be done, and even the *Spectator* grudgingly admits that "free education must come," the approaching season will be marked by one of those great movements in the direction of democracy, which form so wonderful a feature in modern British history. In this case it seems probable that the real beneficence of the measure will be to some extent counteracted by the fact that the schools will still be left, to a large extent, under denominational control, and it is very likely that a determined struggle may take place over this aspect of the scheme. Some time will yet be required, it is very likely, before the majority of the ruling classes can be brought to see that unsectarian education is the corollary and logical complement of free national education.

THE method for putting an end to disputes between nations which was adopted a year or two since by the United States in dealing with a feeble South American State, and which has just now been used by Lord Salisbury in the case of Portugal, has one excellent quality. It is short and decisive. If only it could be applied to, as well as by, a strong nation, such as the United States or France, this saving of time and all the evil results which are the outcome of prolonged disputes would very strongly recommend it. What a pity it is that great nations cannot act with the same mutual straight-forwardness and good sense that would be shewn by respectable private gentlemen or companies in their dealings with each other! What a reproach to our civilization are these interminable disputes and heart-burnings between so-called Christian nations over the interpretation of old treaties. Look at the length of time during which Great Britain and the United States have been cavilling over the Atlantic Fisheries question. And not only is this old dispute no nearer settlement, so far as appears, than it was a score of years ago, but a new one has now arisen in the Pacific which threatens to become equally vexatious and equally chronic. The Newfoundland Fisheries question between England and France is another instance in point, showing how much less business-like and sensible are so-called Christian nations than are sensible, high-minded individuals in their dealings with each other. Grant that the old treaties are indefinite, ambiguous, or obscure. Grant that new conditions have arisen, unforeseen, and consequently unprovided for, by the framers of those treaties. These may be excellent reasons for tearing up, by mutual consent, those misty and musty documents, and agreeing in a friendly and common-sense way upon some clear, fair, fresh compromise. But they surely are no reasons why nations that should be friends and fellow-workers in the world's renovation should prolong year after year and decade after decade a state of vexatious and dangerous irritation. Failing mutual agreement there is always the resource of friendly arbitration. Truly the good and sensible people of these three nations have reason to be ashamed of themselves that with all their culture and progress, sweetness and light, they are unable to devise means for the prompt and permanent settlement of such comparatively trifling disputes. And this is our boasted nineteenth-century civilization!

BALLOT reform is making good progress in the United States. The so-called Australian system is now in operation in ten states, and its adoption in the great state of New York is but a question of time and the subjugation of Governor Hill. The United States Marshal, referring to the recent election in Massachusetts, declares that