

as more than provisional; perhaps they may be used as a leverage in the trade negotiations soon to be resumed between the two countries. Now that the United States demand the whole of the Philippines, other countries will be anxious to know what tariff arrangement is to be applied to them. If a policy of restriction is to be resorted to the United States will find the government of its new possessions anything but an easy matter.

That the American Government would, as the peace negotiations went on, demand the whole of the Philippines, we have predicted from the first. The proposal to take them over and assume the debt of \$40,000,000 has now been made by the American commissioners in Paris. Such is the law of drift. At first there was hesitation about making this demand. Public opinion in the Republic was divided on the desirability of doing so, but there was soon visible a distinct drift in the direction of claiming the whole of the islands. The President appeared to wait the instruction of public opinion. To wait was to develop opinion to the requisite point, and this having been reached the demand is made. There are still plenty of people who haggle at the assumption of the debt of the islands, which has not many public works to show for the expenditure. The debt mainly represents war expenditure, which went off in smoke and left little substantial behind, not even a quelled rebellion and a pacified people being among the visible remains. The United States Senate, which would probably like the Philippines to form part of the United States territory, might not care to father the debt which was created to sustain Spanish supremacy. In the case of Cuba the United States in taking over the island refuses to assume the debt. In neither case was the conquest complete, though in neither was Spain in a position to prolong it; so in both an incomplete conquest is about as effective as it would have been if Havana had been stormed and captured and the whole of the Philippines had been visited and subdued. There are still discontented forces, not representing Spain, both in Cuba and the Philippines, which, in some way, will have to be reckoned with.

If anyone believes in a progressive and uninterrupted increment in the value of real estate, his faith would receive a rude shock in an incident which has just occurred in Toronto. In his lifetime the late Mr. Jesse Ketchum gave to the trustees of Knox's Church six acres of land, bounded by King and Bay streets and Richmond and Queen. On a renewal of the lease of a portion of this block on Queen street the rent has been reduced from \$22.50 to \$12 per foot. The evidence showed that on another part of this block, a lot on Queen with a Richmond street front, the lessee had abandoned a \$3,000 building which he put up, and then obtained a new lease at a great reduction. This property is not in a part of the city which a moving centre is leaving behind. Not only is it in front of the new court house and municipal building, but is a point towards which the centre is conspicuously moving. These facts show the extremity of the depression in real estate, from which recovery has begun, but has not yet got far. They also show in a striking manner that previous prices had gone far too high. Many people are carried away with the idea that it is an advantage to a city to have the price of land to go high; economically the proposition would be difficult to prove. The reverse of it is probably true.

THE PROHIBITION MAJORITY.

After all it is found, now that all the votes are in, that there is a small majority in Canada in favor of prohibition; 18,884 is the figure given on the first count, and subject to

a revision which cannot vary this total much, one way or the other. Quebec alone of all the provinces and territories gives a majority against, and this majority, though not quite equal to all the majorities on the other side, is large, 94,015. Considerably less than half the voters took the trouble to vote. Ordinary elections are decided by active voters, not by abstainers. But this is a question on which a majority too feeble to enforce prohibition will not necessarily move the Legislature to action. The position is awkward: seven provinces and the North-West Territories demand prohibition, in feeble accents; Quebec protests against it with emphasis. What will the Government do? The plebiscite had for its object the ascertainment of public opinion; that opinion reveals a cleavage coincident with certain national and religious lines. The coincidence may be more or less accidental, more or less the result of diverse modes of thought, and in a minor degree of habit. If prohibition be granted it will disoblige Quebec; if it be denied it will ruffle, in a slight degree, seven provinces. For the politicians the question has become a trap, of which some of them may turn to be the victims. In these days of feeble convictions, few public men oppose strong opposition to any view that appears to be gathering strength. The policy of the jumping cat, if it pays, finds adherents. The result of a plebiscite may mean "heads I win, tails you lose." If, as some assert, the weight of the Government was thrown against prohibition, it was done secretly and in such a way that proof will not be easy, if possible at all. Ostensibly, the Government, in its official capacity, was neutral. The individuals of which it is composed, make no secret of holding different views, some of which were expressed so strongly that it is difficult to see how it could propose a measure of prohibition without producing some protests in the form of resignation.

LORD ABERDEEN ON THE CIVIL SERVICE.

In his speech at the farewell banquet given to him in Toronto, Lord Aberdeen quoted with approbation some remarks of one of his predecessors, Lord Dufferin, on the civil service of the country. "Independence, zeal, patriotism, he [Lord Dufferin] remarked, should be its distinguishing marks, and neither original appointment nor subsequent advancement should in any way depend upon political connection nor opinion." Lord Aberdeen admitted the latter part of this suggestion would encounter practical difficulties, but that if not attainable all at once, acting upon the competitive system might open the way to a change. And he added: "Even where the competitive system would not be necessary or applicable the need in view would be more readily obtained if the public employee were made to feel that neither original appointment nor subsequent advancement depended upon political influence, but that each individual having first proved that he is fit to enter the service, will be counted worthy of advancement in accordance with the manner in which that service has been performed." When one political party has been long in power and has appointed none but its own friends to office, a change of Government is apt to bring with it a demand for a resort to the spoils system, and the creation of vacancies is demanded for no other reason than that the partisans of a new Government are clamorous for patronage. This kind of revolution has fortunately not yet gone far. In the Dominion we have, nominally, the merit system, but of the large numbers who pass the civil service requirements, few without political influence get appointments, so few that Lord Aberdeen seems to speak as if such a system had got little farther than the recommendation of the report of the commission.