

Parliament will probably pass in some shape, and thousands of seamen, with their families, will have occasion to bless the memory of him who has proved so indefatigable a friend.

The current session of the Canadian Parliament has been characterized by the discussion of an unprecedentedly large number of questions affecting the privileges of the House. Most of these have arisen out of controverted election cases; but one, the latest, raises a point which has never yet been decided in a Canadian Assembly. While there can be but one opinion respecting the bad taste displayed by any newspaper writer who makes use of intemperate language in assailing his political opponents, and while the offence is manifestly greater when the writer is himself a member of Parliament, there can be no doubt that freedom of discussion in the press is more or less involved in the matter. It is not easy to see how the member for Gloucester can be brought to the Bar of the House without bringing some others there along with him; for it is a notorious fact that he stands by no means alone in the style of writing complained of. There are other journalists in the House whose papers often indulge in opprobrious epithets, and it would be as impolitic as it would be unjust to censure one without censuring all alike. If this incident should help to spread the conviction that the functions of an independent journalist and a member of Parliament are so incompatible, that the same person cannot successfully discharge both at the same time, perhaps nothing would be lost. It is well known that the most successful journalist, and one of the most successful political leaders of Canada, has frequently and publicly declared that he found it necessary to make a choice between the two positions; and there are numerous considerations lying upon the very surface of the question which tend to drive the attentive observer towards the same conclusion. It is not desirable to have members penning newspaper strictures on their fellow-members, and it is just as little desirable to place any restrictions at present on the liberty of the press. Canadian journals, though low enough in tone, are improving in character; and anything like arbitrary interference just now would in all probability do more harm than good. As was well remarked by the member for West Middlesex, himself connected with the Fourth Estate, the dignity of the House of Commons is of less importance than the freedom of the newspaper press. The House could survive an assault upon its dignity, and the country would never wince; but it is questionable whether it would be wise to establish such a precedent as some seem disposed to establish in the present case, when we have managed to get on for so long a time without.

Both of the Pacific Railway charges brought by newspapers against the Government have come up in Parliament, and in each