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All articles, contributions, and letters on matter pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

CURRENT TOPICS.

"Where in any Province a system of separate or dissentient schools exists by law at the Union, or is thereafter established by the Legislature of the Province, an appeal shall lie to the Governor-General in Council from any act or decision of any Provincial authority affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education."

The above, which is sub-section 3, sec. 93, of the B. N. A. Act, is, as will appear to any one who will take the trouble to study it carefully in its connection, with a view to satisfy himself as to its exact meaning, a most peculiar bit of legislation. It would not be surprising should it become one among the many legislative enactments which are famous for their obscurities or ambiguities. We are curious to know the inner history of this clause. It does not seem to belong to the section. It sounds very like an after-thought, inserted without too close scrut-

iny of its meaning or logical connection. But there it is, and though its meaning is, it appears, to be made the subject of reference to the highest judicial authorities in the Dominion, and very likely eventually to the highest in the Empire, we do not suppose that it is beyond the province of the journalistic laymen, in the meantime, to amuse himself with guesses as to the nature of the danger against which it was devised as a safeguard.

The chief difficulty is, of course, in the cases covered by the clause "or is thereafter established by the legislature of the Province." This covers the case of Manitoba, and with it only need we at present concern ourselves. Now in such a case what "right or privilege" has the Roman Catholic minority in relation to education? It goes without saying that it must be some right or privilege conferred under the Act of the Legislature establishing the Separate schools. The conditional part of the paragraph would be meaningless else. Some have hastily assumed that the right to have separate schools itself is created by the act of establishing them in such sense that such an act once enacted and put into operation can never be repealed. But that is surely absurd. Even Mr. Ewart admits, if correctly reported, that the right to enact implies the right to repeal. But if it be not absurd to suppose any argument needed, the decision of the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council seems conclusive on this point. Were it the meaning that a Provincial Legislature could not repeal its own act, or do away with the separate schools it had itself created, then the Manitoba School Act, which, in effect, if not in so many words, repeals all previous acts, is inconsistent with this queer constitutional provision, and must have been declared ultra vires.

If the foregoing be admitted, it surely settles the whole question. Whatever right or privilege the clause above quoted is designed to protect, it must evidently be, as we have said, a right or privilege conferred by the act or arising out of it. But in that case, the right or privilege conferred by the Provincial Act can exist only concurrently with the Act and must disappear when the Act ceases to exist. If, then, the power to create implies the power to destroy, it follows that the right or privilege of the Catholic minority conferred by an Act ceases to exist when that Act is repealed. Hence, such right or privilege no longer existing, it follows that no appeal to the Governor-General in Council can lie, in respect to it. Q. E. D. Reasoning in this way we are lead to venture the conjecture given last week, that the "act or decision of any Provincial authority" may be intended to refer not to Legislative enactments, but to the execu-

tive acts of some Provincial officers, or the judicial decision of some Provincial tribunal. Such an explanation is not, we confess, satisfactory—though the words "any Provincial authority" rather favour it, for that would be a strange designation for the Provincial Legislature, which is the only Provincial authority which can pass an Act—but how else are we to interpret the riddle?

The unmistakable words of Lord Salisbury, in his address to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, a few days since, should settle the agitation for the adoption of a protective policy in the interests of British landlords and farmers. So far as any headway has been made by the advocates of such a policy it has been made in Conservative circles and under Conservative auspices. No one supposes that the Liberals can be won over to a reversal of the free trade system which is so congenial to all their modes of thinking. When, therefore, the Great Tory leader bluntly declares, in the face of the theories of some of his followers and the resolutions even of some conservative gatherings, that a tariff on corn is absolutely outside the dreams of any politician, it is hardly worth while, one may infer, to discuss the question further. With this strong declaration falls, too, any hope that certain colonialists may cherish, of preferential trade for colonial behoof. But the most remarkable part of Lord Salisbury's utterance is the lofty ground on which he bases his statement. He questions not only the expediency but the morality of the tariff, as a weapon against other nations. This is a memorable saying. The immorality, the greedy, calculating and cruel selfishness, apart from its shortness of sight, is a phase of protectionism which has not hitherto been sufficiently dwelt upon. Why should a government or a nation be regardless of others to an extent which would brand an individual as utterly selfish?

"We have proved in Egypt, what has been proved a hundred times elsewhere, that we are a hopelessly illogical nation, and that when we are concerned, major and minor and middle terms are utterly useless and might as well have never been invented." So says the Spectator, in a review of "England in Egypt," a valuable work recently published by Mr. Alfred Milner, late Under-Secretary for Finance in Egypt. The special reasoning which calls forth this remark is that in which Mr. Milner, after laying down as his major premise the proposition that if the interference of any European power is to bear good fruit in Egypt, such interference must be from the first understood by the natives to be irresistible and unquestionable, and that the Power involved must have a clear understanding of its own aims, and must carry them out by means of a policy that