

The British Parliament appears to have stimulated itself to an unmitigable eagerness for reform in the administration of the army. The war office is apparently to be entirely remodelled, if not abolished altogether, and the Commander-in-Chief is to share the latter fate, the Secretary of State's power to sign warrants is to be taken away, and full control of expenditure is to be given to Parliament. Rumor points to something like the German system with an Imperial General Staff, and a Chief of the Staff, who would be, like Count Moltke, the virtual Commander-in-Chief of the army. Whatever system may be adopted can hardly be so cumbersome, circuitous and intricate as the present ill-defined relations between the office of the Secretary of State for War and the Horse Guards.

Whatever it may be to the members of the Provincial Legislature the present mode of reporting the debates at length in the daily papers is eminently unsatisfactory to the general public. In a week or two from the opening of a session the reports inevitably fall into arrears, and after its close it takes a month before they are finished with. It is no doubt pleasant to members to contemplate their deliveries *in extenso* day by day, but it is not a matter of such entrancing interest to the ordinary reader to wade through speeches three columns long delivered by one man to prove an inconsistency in the present opinion of another legislator from those which he advocated six or seven or ten years ago. Why should not our newspapers be left to their own enterprise to summarise the debates as seems best to them, while the Legislature trusts to a Hansard as they do in Ottawa. The *Hansard* slips at Ottawa, we believe, keep up with the course of debate within a day or two, and of course every member could be furnished with a sufficient number to send to whomsoever he pleased.

A curious rumor is in circulation to the effect that no less a person than the Prince of Wales is behind Mr. Labouchere in his attack on the Government for conniving at the escape of Lord Arthur Somerset and the other criminals implicated in the great West-End scandal. There are considerations which render this not by any means improbable. Prince Albert Victor's name having been mentioned in connection with the disgraceful affair, which, it is said, was an infamous falsehood invented by Somerset to defend himself from arrest, the Prince of Wales, confident in the innocence of his son, would naturally feel indignant, and is reported to have demanded action on the part of the Government, whereupon followed Somerset's flight. It is now stated that Sir Francis Knollys, the Prince's Secretary, was Mr. Labouchere's informant, and authorized the use of the Prince's name. The matter seems likely to be a serious one for the Government unless Lord Salisbury can give a better account of it than seems at present likely, as Mr. Labouchere is a formidable and persistent investigator in such a case.

Another high-life scandal is afloat, emanating this time from St. Petersburg, a rather dangerous place, one would think, for a man to commit himself in, particularly one connected with a foreign embassy. The hero of the rumored escapade is the son of Sir Robert Morier, the British ambassador. One report is that a defalcation had been brought to light in the embassy, and another is that young Morier, presuming on friendship, made overtures for an elopement with the wife of an Irish earl, who, with her husband, was at the Russian capital. Whichever it was, Victor Morier attempted suicide at two o'clock on the morning of the ball, at which a scene is said to have taken place on the lady's refusal. As it is possible the affair may lead to the recall of Sir Robert Morier, it has been remarked that it will, in that event, be a curious addition to the legend which credits Prince Bismarck's luck in getting rid of his opponents in policy of whom Sir Robt. Morier has been the foremost, the ablest and the most successful. In this connection the names of Arnim, Skobelev, Gambetta, Prince Rudolph and Boulanger have been cited.

A very curious and instructive instance of party differences of opinion is furnished by the comments of the Press of Great Britain on the report of the Parnell Commission. Newspapers of all shades of political opinion profess to be entirely satisfied with its findings, proving their own cases from points in their favor, and entirely ignoring what is said against them. The *Times* itself still believes the report will be accepted by the public as entirely confirming its assertions. The *Standard* says it entirely convicts Parnell and his associates of all the public ever believed against them, while the *Daily News* declares the innocence of the defendants to be absolutely vindicated. The *Pall Mall Gazette* asserts it is a glorious victory, and the *Star* says it is clearly a verdict of not guilty for Parnell and his followers. The *Manchester Examiner* says the report warrants all the charges brought against the Nationalists, while the *Manchester Guardian* congratulates the Irish leaders on escaping scatheless. The *Liverpool Courier* says all right thinking men ought to be driven away from Parnell's shady connections, while the *Liverpool Post* holds that the *Times*' case has completely broken down, and the *Liverpool Mercury* says Parnell comes out without a stain. The *Birmingham Gazette* says the charges are proved up to the hilt, while the *Bristol Mercury* says Parnell's glory is more brilliantly and clearly proved than ever. The *Edinburgh Scotsman* says Mr. Parnell cannot be congratulated on the result, while the *Scottish Leader* says he has supremely triumphed. The *Freeman's Journal* of Dublin says it is an absolutely crushing judgment against the *Times*, while the *Dublin Express* says the moral weight of the verdict against the defendant is undeniable, and so on throughout the length and breadth of the land. Every paper is perfectly satisfied with the report, and argues conclusions arrived at from its own particular point of view. To judge from these conflicting dicta it might be inferred that the report is a masterpiece of diplomacy.

The deceased wife's sister is now, it seems, reinforced by her daughter. Senator Almon introduced in the Senate last week a bill to legalise marriage with this relative or connection, there being, the Senator says, legal opinion that the legality of the nearer marriage does not apply to the other case. Surely this is a measure of supererogation. If a man may marry his wife's sister, her daughter is at all events one remove further off, and with an additional infusion of other blood. We should imagine the greater should cover the less—the nearer the more remote.

It is reported that a certain English Countess has caused it to be understood that for \$5,000 paid in advance she will undertake to present Americans at court and to society generally during the coming London season. When unquestionably aristocratic ladies go into legitimate business it is safe to say that they gain in respect from the world at large. It would be difficult to maintain that trading on social prestige is not as justifiable as the use of any other casual advantage—the possession, for instance, of money wherewith to make more—but there is nevertheless something about such an arrangement that grates harshly on the sense of fitness and dignity.

The *Toronto Mail* has the following interesting paragraph:—"It is a hard thing to say of a British Colony that in one portion of it popular disaffection is prevented from exploding only by the readiness of the people to go into exile." The disgrace of such an utterance, however, lies less in its "hardness" than in its unblushing falsehood and scandalous slander. But what is far harder—as is justly observed by a contemporary—"is that Canada's domestic enemies, instead of exiling themselves to the country to which they give the preference, should remain here to act the part of traitors within the camp, and thus serve more effectively their foreign allies and patrons."

The curiosity of the Public Accounts Committee of the Commons has been aroused as to the capacity of the boxes of stationery which Honorable Senators are in the habit of carrying away with them at the end of each session, which, to judge from their requisitions, must be pretty large. The Honorable gentlemen inform the Commons that their own Committee of Contingencies has charge of this matter, and that the Public Accounts Committee must await their report. The fact is the amount of stationery used and appropriated by the Senate is simply scandalous, and the Commons would only do right if they cut off their estimates altogether for a session, and look to it that their own are kept within the bounds of actual requirement. It has now also come to light that no inventories have been checked, and no precautions whatever taken as to the public property at Rideau Hall on a change of vice-royalty. These things, together with such items as Sir Adolphe Caron's \$900 for cab-hire, indicate a pretty urgent necessity for looking sharply into matters of expenditure at Ottawa. It is evident that security has bred a spirit of extravagance.

The *Chronicle*, commenting on the continued enormous investments of British capital in the United States, says that if the English capitalists go on as have been doing they will soon own the country. "I is a blow," our contemporary continues, "at the presumptuous arrogance and supercilious boasting of our American neighbors that they are losing the grip of their own affairs by the business sagacity and boundless wealth of John Bull. Brother Jonathan will soon be mortgaged to him for all he is worth." This is a cheerful view of the position, but it strikes us there is another which would be less satisfactory to British investors should what is involved in it ever come to pass. Whenever chance or circumstance may place in the hands of the tail-twisters a cry calculated to take with the anti-British mass, we are sufficiently acquainted with American unscrupulousness and eagerness to enact sweeping laws to meet a fancied emergency or popular prejudice, to think that British capital in the States might at any moment find itself in a very perilous position, which might result in absolute loss. Should such a misfortune come to pass, British capitalists might find themselves regretting that they had not given more attention to Canada, and less to our slippery neighbors.

The *Montreal Witness* is one of the soundest and most reliable journals in Canada except on one or two points, wherein zeal for what it believes to be right overrides discrimination and tolerance. One, and the chief, of these is Prohibition. Incidentally speaking of the Mosaic Law the *Witness* acknowledges that "the new wine of to-day cannot be held in these old bottles. 'Moses, for the hardness of your heart, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so.' The public conscience had already got beyond the law of Moses, or the question about divorce would not have been brought to our Lord." Yet the *Witness* is intent upon forging fresh shackles for the conscience of humanity—shackles which, we venture to predict, will never be endured. "It will have to be admitted," the *Witness* continues, "that the public conscience does not yet revolt against liquor selling as it revolts against stealing, or abhor the liquor seller as it does the thief." The utterance of such a complaint shows in itself the extravagance and bigotry of Prohibitionism, but it will not have the effect of reducing the respectable brewer or wine-merchant to the level of the felon in the eyes of any reasonable man. But our respected contemporary crowns its confession of faith in the sentence: "We believe that the best education of conscience in the matter is a prohibitory law—Thou shalt not sell." We venture to say that prohibition is no educator whatever of conscience or morals, and that it would be a material and moral tyranny to which no race of free men will be cajoled into submitting.