

and sell would be better. When a few foundation stones are removed the whole fabric will begin to totter to its fall. If, on the other hand, the Government shrink from drawing upon their devoted heads the hot indignation of the protected manufacturers who openly claim to have placed them in power, and attempt to satisfy the growing clamour with a few unimportant readjustments, the Opposition will have the opportunity of a political lifetime, and will prove themselves singularly incompetent if they fail to take advantage of the situation and make their way to the treasury benches.

Closely connected with the tariff question will be that of our future trade relations with the United States. It is not necessary to deny that the Government have made energetic and praiseworthy efforts to open up the British and other markets for some of those Canadian products which have been denied admission to the United States. In this case, too, the necessity for vigorous action has had a stimulating effect upon Canadian enterprise. Under any circumstances it is evident that Canada in the future will do more trading with Great Britain and other distant countries and to better advantage than hitherto. But after Canadian energy and enterprise shall have been laid under contribution to their full extent in developing trans-oceanic trade, the fact will remain that without access to the markets of the United States, a very large class of Canadian producers must suffer. What is imperatively needed for the general prosperity is the freest possible trade relations with our wealthy next-door neighbors. Given such relations, without detriment to the expanding commerce with Britain and with foreign nations, and who can doubt that Canada would at once enter upon a career of prosperity not exceeded by that of any people in the world.

But is free access to the markets of the United States attainable on any conditions which Canada could accept without sacrifice of duty or of self-respect? Singularly enough this is a question in regard to which we have directly contradictory testimony from the only two parties who are in a position to know. According to the version of the late conference given by Messrs. Blaine and Foster, the ex-Secretary, and the present Secretary, respectively, of the U. S. Government, the conditions offered were such as most persons would pronounce fair and reasonable, viz.: that the list of goods to come under the treaty of reciprocity must include manufactures as well as natural products, and that the tariffs must be mutually preferential. This would have involved discrimination to a certain extent against the mother country in common with all other nations, but such discrimination is of the very nature of reciprocity treaties and could not be objected to by Great Britain, who would be only too glad to see a revival of Canadian prosperity and progress upon such terms. On the other hand, according to the recollections of Sir John Thompson and our Mr. Foster, reciprocity was offered only on condition of Canada's adoption of the United States' tariff, which is of course a very different matter. This matter should be fairly faced and discussed during the session, not so much to settle the question of correctness of memory, which would be a delicate and unprofitable business, as to pronounce upon the desirability of now taking the American representatives at their word, and seeking a renewal of negotiations on

the lines which they have distinctly laid down. It is scarcely conceivable that the incoming Washington Administration will be less favourable to such an arrangement than the outgoing one. What attitude will our Government take, is one of the test questions.

A scarcely less important and even more exciting topic which may come before the House in some shape is that of the Manitoba schools. It is probable, however, that every effort will be made to prevent the tossing back and forth of this firebrand amongst the combustible material which abounds on the floors of Parliament. We suspect that the Premier's policy will be one of delay and masterly inactivity. The judicial inquiry which is now dragging its slow length along before the Privy Council will probably be made to subserve such a policy. Sir John Thompson is now credited in some quarters, not too friendly perhaps, with an intention to settle the struggle by giving to the representatives of the defunct Separate schools a portion of the proceeds of the sale of the Manitoba school lands. Surely an enemy is spreading this report. It is not unlikely, in any case, that an enemy will give him an opportunity to deny its correctness from the Government benches. Such an invasion, or rather evasion, of the constitutional right of the Province with reference to school legislation would arouse a tempest second in violence only to the tornado which would sweep over it, should it be announced that the Dominion authorities were about to compel the re-establishment of the Separate school system.

The fast North Atlantic steamship route, and the connected question touching the International railway is another of the large subjects which demand full and free discussion. Whether the Government will have any definite proposals to lay before Parliament does not yet appear.

The reports of the Caron and Temperance Commissions, bid fair, each in its way, to give rise to serious if not heated discussions. The presence of Mr. Tarte in the House has been supposed by some to be ominous of a new series of revelations, but the absence of threats and foreshadowings in the press, such as heralded the previous campaign seems against the supposition.

THE GAMBLING MANIA.

A few weeks since, the London *Spectator*, in an article which reads too much like a half-apology for gambling, at least in its more fashionable forms, spoke of "the perpetual vitality and universal diffusion of the gambling spirit." "Probably," the writer said, "nine persons out of ten would be made happier by the knowledge that sometime within the next few weeks or months they will have the chance of winning an appreciable sum of money. It adds a little excitement to their lives, it sustains them under the pressure of present shortness of cash, it gilds the future with a contingent brightness." May we not venture to hope with a considerably larger percentage that nine out of ten the question of the manner in which the sum of money might be won would very materially qualify the joy of the anticipation?

The immediate occasion of the *Spectator's* article was the "Missing-Word" competition which for a time attracted so much attention in England and which was finally placed under

the ban of the Lottery acts by a judgment given by Sir John Bridge. The *Spectator* accepts the judgment as wise and necessary under the circumstances, but, in so doing, bases its assent upon singularly narrow grounds. "In itself," it says, "a missing-word competition is just as innocent as a Derby sweepstakes at a club, and if the shillings paid bore the same proportion to the means of the players as is the case with the contributors to a sweepstakes, it would be just as innocent in its results." According to this view the crime is not in the thing itself, or in the aims and intentions of those who take part in it, but depends entirely upon the question whether those who engage in it can afford to risk the amount of money involved in what the court has declared to be a game of chance and consequently gambling, pure and simple. "The public is not concerned," says the writer, "how men spend their money provided it is honestly come by. But the public is concerned to prevent men—or boys—from being led on to spend money which is not honestly come by." In other words the Court was justified in declaring the practice in question a pernicious and a criminal practice, not because of anything wrong or evil in the thing itself, but because of the danger lest the passion to which it appeals might become so overmastering as to lead persons of limited means to procure money for the purchase of tickets by dishonest practices.

Such a view of the question is obviously superficial and if acted on would lead to class legislation of the most objectionable kind. The rejoinder which readily suggests itself is that every objectionable act or practice should bear its own burden. Let those who put their hands into the tills of their employers, or resort to other dishonest means of obtaining money to purchase tickets for "missing-word" competitions, be punished for the crime which they commit, rather than others prevented from the gratification of "a universal instinct," if the mode of gratifying it be innocent in itself and objectionable only by reason of ulterior consequences to which it may occasionally lead.

To those more radical reformers who regard the practice of gambling as in itself a vice and its consequences as only evil and that continually, the question takes on a much more serious aspect. Gambling has now come to be regarded by many of the best men in England as the national vice of Englishmen, if not of the British race everywhere. Whether and to what extent it may be practised among the wealthier classes merely as an exciting and fashionable amusement it is hard to say. Certain it is that the ruin and misery which it begets and in which it is probably more prolific than any other practice save that of drinking, are by no means confined to the lower or the poorer classes. In the United States, where it seems to be constantly breaking out in new forms, its source is by general consent to be found in the desire "to get something for nothing" which has been declared to be the great American vice. As such a desire lies at the root of every form of roguery, the practice of gambling, however fashionable in some of its forms, is at once classified as a member of a very disreputable family. True, it differs from most other devices having the same end in view in that the losing party knows and voluntarily, so long as he is in a position to be regarded as a free agent, takes his risk. Of course he always does so in the