

Ambassador. Were it otherwise, were it possible for Canada to have an accredited agent or representative at Washington, who would be recognized as such and consulted by the American Ministers in all matters affecting Canadian interests, it is easy to see that great good might result, if in no other way, by means of the better information which each Government might gain in regard to the views, feelings and purposes of the other. As matters now stand, we fear there is nothing for us but to accept with the best possible grace the disadvantages and disabilities which are inseparable from the colonial relation.

COMMENTING last week on what was then only matter of rumour, we ventured to intimate that, as it is a poor rule which will not work both ways, it did not seem at all likely that the Government and Senate of the United States would consent, as a condition of the renewal of the *modus vivendi*, to assume responsibility for damages to Canadian sealers in case the decision of the Arbitrators should be against the United States' claim, unless on the condition that Great Britain should assume a corresponding responsibility for damages to citizens of the United States, should the decision be adverse to the British contention. We now learn from the published correspondence that Lord Salisbury did not propose anything so one-sided. On the contrary his suggestion distinctly involved the principle of mutual responsibility. This is eminently fair, and it would have been extraordinary had the American Executive found anything to object to in it on that score. Objection might indeed have been made on the ground of the great difficulty that would arise in determining the validity of claims for damages for seals which might have been caught but for the prohibition, but were not. But the United States would still have the advantage in this matter, unless the responsibility were carefully restricted in point of time in its backward scope. Otherwise Great Britain might find herself called on to pay not only for all the seals actually taken in past years by Canadian sealers, but for the problematic offspring which these might have produced had they been left to multiply. True, it would be scarcely fair to charge the same price for seals swimming at large in the sea as for those actually caught and in the market, and the constructive claim would have had to be once more modified in accordance with the result of some nice calculation of the chances for and against a given seal being caught, had it been permitted to come into existence. Compared with so complicated a claim as this, the calculation of damages for all the seals killed in past years by Canadian fishermen would be a simple affair. It is by no means likely, however, that Lord Salisbury's proposal refers to any such shadowy past, or to anything outside of the current year, during which the *modus vivendi* under consideration is to operate. Even thus limited, the computation of claims would be largely guess-work on either side. It is evident that the terms of reference will need to be carefully guarded. But the most important point in Lord Salisbury's despatch is the fact which constitutes its primary condition, viz., that the alternatives proposed to meet the Washington demand for a renewal of the *modus vivendi* are made distinctly contingent on the new state of affairs which will exist when the Arbitration Treaty shall have been ratified by the United States' Senate, and not before. A shrewder bit of diplomacy, or a more delicate way of putting a gentle pressure upon said Senate, without possibility of giving offence to hasten its action, it would not be easy to conceive. And yet it can hardly be denied that Lord Salisbury's proposals are as fair as they are courteous. We may now surely hope that the end of this long-drawn-out and vexatious controversy is near.

NOTWITHSTANDING all his brave words the Emperor of Germany has been compelled to bow to the popular voice and withdraw the obnoxious primary education Bill. The people of Germany are to be congratulated, not only on the defeat of a measure founded on the most vicious principles, but on the triumph of the popular right of self-government. It may be hoped that the lesson will prove a salutary one for the self-willed and fiery young ruler, who has hitherto seemed to think himself wiser than all the rest of the nation. He certainly will prove himself obtuse as well as obstinate if he does not count the cost before he again measures his strength against that of the majority of his subjects. The fact that he has had the wisdom to yield with what grace he could before the struggle assumed a more dangerous phase, augurs well for his ability to learn

and to forget, when circumstances make it necessary to do the one or the other, or both. Meanwhile the sturdy refusal of the German people to suffer the primary education of the children of the nation to be put into the hands of the ecclesiastics redounds to their credit for firmness as well as for foresight. The result of the struggle can hardly fail to have a powerful effect in furthering the cause of liberalism and constitutional government in Germany. By and bye, when the people have fully learned their power and their rights, they will begin to reduce the enormous armaments which are crushing the life out of the nation and will compel the Government to relax the cruel stringency of the military system. That will be a distinct step forward in European civilization.

OTTAWA LETTER.

SO far this Session of Parliament has been exceedingly uninteresting. Even the debate on the Budget, which generally demands attention both inside and outside the House, passed off tamely.

Mr. Foster is a man who allows no opportunity to go by of improving the talents with which Providence has endowed him. With somewhat more than ordinary natural ability, and a good deal more than ordinary perseverance and persistency, he has raised himself to a high position in the country, and, as each succeeding year passes, gains in the estimation of his friends, and in the respect of his opponents.

As a mere formal presentation of the financial position of the country and of the policy of the Government on the question of trade, the Finance Minister's speech was admirable. It was near the close that he let the House into his confidence as to the result of the recent "pow-wow" with Mr. Blaine respecting reciprocal trade relations between Canada and the United States. He announced in brief that a satisfactory arrangement could not be reached. Members on the Government side applauded this announcement, but, in justice to all but the extreme Jingo element, it must be said the applause was not given because negotiations could not be brought to successful termination, but because Mr. Foster's explanation proved the oft-repeated assertions of his supporters in and out the House, that Commercial Union is the only acceptable reciprocity to our Southern neighbours.

Sir Richard Cartwright and his henchmen took Mr. Foster's announcement very gravely. They asserted that the Canadian delegation to Mr. Blaine went with the purpose of frustrating reciprocity; and that they began the conference by suggesting obstacles. Further, they said, a political party, noted for its wild and extravagant abuse of men and customs American, could not expect to meet with any success in negotiating trade relations with the representatives of the nation they so outrageously libelled. If the Liberals had the handling of the business, different would have been the result! Sir Richard implied that this news, which would reach the country in a few hours, would undoubtedly have the effect of giving a renewed impetus to any movement in the direction of political union.

If all this be true, what is the country's loss must prove the Liberals' gain. If the people of Canada have been sanguine of the early arrangement of reciprocity with the United States, and the news that all is over in that direction will come as a crushing blow to their hopes, they will surely lay the blame on the present Government, and visit them with swift and merited vengeance. Aside from the party view of this question, no one can but deplore the fact that the respective Governments of Canada and the United States find what seems a very great difficulty in arranging for some sort of reciprocity, which would most decidedly be for the benefit of both. As to who is to blame for this state of affairs will long remain a matter for difference of opinion.

In last week's letter reference was made to a Bill introduced by Mr. Taylor with a view of preventing the importation of alien labourers under contract to perform work in Canada. The opposition to the Bill was strong.

On Saturday last an influential deputation of the Trades and Labour Congress waited upon Mr. Abbott, who was supported by Sir John Thompson, Mr. Ouimet, Mr. Carling and Sir Adolphe Caron. Among those in the deputation were the president, Urbain La Fontaine, Messrs. A. W. Wright and Charles Marsh, of Toronto. Mr. Lepine, M.P., who is regarded as a special advocate of the interests of labour in the House, introduced the delegates to the Premier and his *confreeres*. Mr. LaFontaine read a series of resolutions adopted by the Trades and Labour Congress, upon the subjects of day's labour for public works; the right of appeal to seamen from decisions of magisterial courts; the importation of artisans by assisted immigration; and requesting the withdrawal of Government aid from steamship companies, which make misleading statements for the purpose of increasing immigrant travel; asking the payment of the current local scale of wages in all public works; the gradual reduction of hours of labour to eight; for the appointment of a Dominion board of arbitration, and the passage of a law to prevent the importation of alien labourers under contract

to perform work in Canada. The secretary, Mr. George W. Dower, and Mr. Wright dealt particularly with the proposed Alien Labour Act. It was pointed out that the Labour Congress did not object to working men coming into this country excepting where they were imported for the purpose of competing with, and sometimes supplanting, Canadian labour. The delegates took a pronounced stand against the assistance which the Government gives to immigration. Mr. Marsh made the serious assertion that not more than twenty-five per cent. of those employed in the building trades in Toronto have employment at present. The Government were also reminded that the contractor for the new drill shed in Toronto was having the stone for the building cut outside the city. The stone masons of Toronto declined to set the stone under these conditions, and the brick layers were also ready to strike. After listening to the various requests of this body the usual answer, to the effect that the Government would seriously consider what had been told them, was given.

The principal society item for the week is over the departure for England of the Honourable Major Colville, lately Military Secretary and Secretary to His Excellency. Major Colville has always been most courteous in the discharge of his duties and was a general favourite in Ottawa society. A farewell banquet was tendered to the parting guest at the Rideau Club, the host of the evening being Sir John Thompson. It was rather an unfortunate coincidence that the annual Press dinner was held on the same evening as Sir John Thompson could not attend both and had previously arranged to preside at the banquet to Major Colville.

The appointment of Brevet Major the Hon. J. T. St. Aubyn, Grenadier Guards, as the successor to Major Colville is gazetted.

The Press dinner passed off very well indeed. His Excellency was present and was as happy in his remarks as upon a previous occasion when he was the honoured guest of the Canadian Press Association.

The removal of the duty on binding twine has been advocated in past sessions, and is again before the House. There seems to be very little to be said in support of continuing this duty, which it has been conclusively pointed out fails altogether as a source of revenue, and is simply continued, whether intentionally or not, as a benefit to a huge combine. It would be bad enough if this combine were simply among Canadians, but it makes matters much worse when we learn that the trust is international, a number of Canadian cordage factories having been bought up by the American combine. As Mr. Davin, who spoke unhesitatingly in favour of the abolition of this duty, pointed out, it is contrary to the theory of protection that, when combines result, protection shall be continued.

The London election is not yet done with, and if the Liberals can they will make some capital out of it. On Monday Mr. Lister presented a petition praying for the removal from the bench of Judge Elliot, on the ground that his continuance in that position will tend to destroy public confidence in the administration of Justice. The petitioners allege that during the election and while the appeal was pending, the Judge contributed articles to the *London Free Press*, which articles were of a violent and partisan character, and that in his decision he was influenced by his political leanings. It is said that Mr. Lister will move for the impeachment of Judge Elliot.

Col. Amyot's return to his first love, the Conservative party, is not a great surprise to anyone. Whatever may be said of his particular case, there is no denying the fact that the public man in Canada who changes his political opinions, and has the temerity to publicly own the change, is almost always charged with acting from other motives than those which conscience dictates. In such cases so careful of party allegiance are we, that we hold a man guilty until he is proven innocent, reversing the sound maxim of English law. It is not for us to say whether Col. Amyot's change may or may not be attributed to what Sir Richard would call "party exigencies"; but we feel bound to say that his speech on the subject was fearless, and gave us the impression that he was sincere. His friendly allusion to Mr. Laurier was quite touching, while his adverse criticism of the Liberal leader's Ontario followers constituted him the very *enfant terrible* of the party.

T. C. L. K.

AT San Buenaventura, Cal., an artesian well was sunk some years ago on the beach a few feet from high water mark. A strong flow of water spouted thirty feet above the mouth of the well when a depth of 143 feet had been reached. The overflow was found to contain thousands of young trout, and examination of the well showed the presence of numberless trout measuring about two inches in length, and normally developed. The temperature of the water was 64° Fahr. The fish were supposed to come a distance of several miles from the head waters of the Santa Clara River through a subterranean outlet. It is not uncommon to find fish in artesian wells in California. Mrs. Rosa Smith Eigenmann several years ago published an account in the "Proceedings of the National Museum," if we remember aright, of the finding of sticklebacks (*Gasterosteus williamsoni*) in such a locality. In Missouri recently a small blind fish was found in a well and forwarded to the Fish Commissioner at Washington; the species is a common inhabitant of cave streams.—*Forest and Stream*.