

of the policy remained unaffected by anything that had occurred in the meantime. As the dispute was created by this lady signing a document, which assigned the policy, it would be unfair to give her the costs of the proceedings of the Rolls Court. Each of the parties would have to bear their own costs of the Rolls Court proceedings, but Mrs. Lavender having succeeded in her appeal was entitled to her costs of proceedings in this Court as against the various parties.

#### THE QUEBEC EDUCATIONAL BILL.

The Bill introduced into the Quebec Legislature dealing with the public school arrangements of this Province is scarcely of the character hoped for or anticipated by the friends of educational progress. The hope was that the measure would be designed to raise the standard and efficiency of the schools of the Province for securing which more liberal provision is required for the teachers and the general equipments of the schools. The leading feature of the Act is the creation of the office of "Minister of Public Instruction," who will be a member of the Government in power. He will have "The administration and management of everything which concerns public instruction." He will be empowered "to select the books, maps, globes and plans to be used in all the schools out of those approved by either Committee of the Council of Public Instruction." He will also have authority "to acquire the copyright of books, maps and other publications." He is to have also the power "to suspend any School Inspector who refuses or neglects to obey any of his orders." Amongst members of both the Liberal and Conservative parties there is felt to be a fear that the proposed system would tend to give a political aspect to the management of the public schools of the Province. It is feared that, whatever party were in power, there would be an opportunity of manipulating the schools for the advancement of the political interests of the Minister of Public Instruction. To entrust such extensive powers in connection with our schools to a Member of the Government of the day, whether Liberal or Conservative, is a very grave step. In this Province the population comprises persons of diverse nationalities, creeds and classes whose ideas do not as readily harmonize as those of our other Provinces and of other countries. Besides this it is unfortunately too true that politics and political feelings are more exciting and disturbing to the social harmony of the people than is the case in our sister Provinces. Political exigencies do and will arise of intense, overmastering interest to the political parties. Is it reasonable to suppose that a Minister of Public Instruction can be free from the political influences of party interests? Is it not reasonable to fear that, if the political life of his party hung upon his action, that the Minister of Public Instruction would be compelled to carry out the will of the majority? Such considerations, we submit to both parties, render it

inexpedient to subject our educational system to the political influences which at times are so masterful and so inconsiderate to the minority. In view of the varied classes of our population, who are especially open to the excitements of political contests, the action of the Minister of Public Instruction might, under the stress and strain of political exigencies, raise questions which are not desirable in the interests of peace and harmony. The present system works well on the whole. It could be improved materially by more money being devoted to educational purposes. It is most desirable to have the policy of this Department continuous and for the Chief Officer not to be liable to removal at each election. It requires several years' experience to thoroughly equip such an official for the efficient discharge of his duties. His whole time and his whole heart should be given to our educational interests. Such experience could not be acquired, and such thorough, exclusive devotion to school affairs cannot be shown except by a permanent official whose life is bound up with educational interests.

#### PROPOSED BILL RESPECTING THE FINANCES OF THE CITY OF MONTREAL.

It was anticipated that the new Charter in course of preparation would be ready in time for the present meeting of the Legislature. But, owing to the Jubilee Celebration, the meetings of the British Medical Association and the British Association for the promotion of Science, as well as other civic events, it was found impossible to complete the Charter as early as was hoped. It therefore became necessary to make some provision of a temporary character for the purpose of meeting the financial needs of 1898, when the new Charter will be ready.

In former years it was the custom of the city to borrow money temporarily on its general credit in order to meet pressing engagements.

In order to put an end to this system a short Act was introduced last session specifying the probable amounts required by the City, and prohibiting borrowing beyond the amounts so specified. This temporary accommodation it is provided shall be repaid on or before the 1st May, 1899, and provision must be made for its payment out of revenue, or otherwise. It has been urged that a special tax be imposed in order to meet these obligations and to provide for such necessary works as may be deemed advisable in the interests of the City. As, however, it would take time for this special tax to be arranged, if decided upon, it seems desirable in the meantime that the proposed Bill be allowed to pass.

The Council of the Board of Trade had the matter under consideration, and on principle they objected to any further borrowing, without going thoroughly into the exceptional circumstances which render the proposed Bill a necessity. The Council of the Board of Trade passed a resolution, which is given in the following letter to the Mayor, whose reply thereto is appended: