

builders, would have its head clear above the whole cloaca. The country will never know how matters really are, and the North-West will never be well governed, till this happen. With respect to the power of disallowance assumed by the Dominion Government, we are inclined to think Mr. Blake in his strictures pushes his Provincial pretensions a little too far. To cite Mr. Armour again, it appears this power was given for the purpose of preventing the going into force of valid Provincial Acts which would have the force of law, and which would interfere with Dominion policy, and to prevent the going into force of measures that are unconstitutional or doubtful. This last-mentioned purpose is to our mind the justification for some, at least, of the cases of disallowance cited by Mr. Blake. If the power of disallowance did not exist, or were not exercised by the Dominion Government, the onus of opposing, by an expensive legal process, doubtful Acts perhaps highly oppressive on the minority of some Provinces would be thrown on the individual. But as to the boundary question, Mr. Blake is entirely right. The anti-Ontario action of Sir John seems to have been taken at the instigation of his Quebec colleagues and followers, who desire to create another New France in the North-West, and hem in Ontario on all sides by French-speaking settlements; and his failure is a deserved rebuke to such pretensions. And similarly is Mr. Blake correct with respect to the liquor business. Each Province must be supposed to know best how to regulate its own business; and no Province has a right to intermeddle, through the Dominion Parliament, in the internal concerns of another of a different race, habit, and mode of thinking.

MR. BLAKE'S indictment of the Government in the North-West Rebellion is a strong one. If the grievances, being known to exist, had been removed in 1884, Riel's power would not have grown to such a height, and no rebellion would have taken place. The rebellion was a direct outcome of the incapacity, jobbery, and corruption that reigns universal in the affairs of the North-West—perhaps unavoidably incident to the establishment of a wealthy corporation so closely connected with the Government, and to the patronage the opening of half a continent throws into government hands. Mr. Blake held a brief for the country at the last session of Parliament, and he did his duty; but he could do little more than lodge his plea. It was too late for discussion, because the House was wearied by the protracted session, and unfit to cope with the subject; it was also too early, because no one was well-informed on the subject. It is now for him, with fuller information, to bring his plaint again before the House; and this should be the main business of the coming session. A rebellion against real or fancied injustice has taken place in a part of Canada altogether under the government of Conservative appointees; and whether the charges brought against some of these be true or not, it is impossible for the country in the circumstances to close the page and say it will read no further. The fullest investigation into every circumstance preceding and attending the rebellion must be had before the Conservative Party will be purged of the suspicion that now attaches to it; and if this be not accorded promptly and frankly, so much the worse in the long run for the Conservative Party. It is useless for the party press to attempt to raise a false issue through the Riel agitation. The question before the country is not at all the execution of Riel, but the causes that produced the rebellion he headed. The Riel case will have, indeed, to be discussed by Parliament, because, as Mr. Blake puts it, his charges of mismanagement against the Government have been declared by the Government to be a defence of the prisoner. They have rested their defence on his condemnation. And perhaps if they had pardoned him it might have been taken as a confession of their own culpability. Therefore it is most desirable that by the fullest investigation the country may be convinced that the Government have not been guilty of the baseness of punishing Riel to screen themselves. Mr. Blake while deprecating, generally, criticism of the exercise or non-exercise of the prerogative of mercy, yet holds the Riel case to be one for Parliamentary enquiry, for the reason that the trial was for an extraordinary political offence, on which agitation has supervened, and because some prominent supporters of the Government declare they have been misled and deceived by the Government, charging that the execution was to punish an old offence, and to gratify the hate of another set of government supporters. Alleging that the Government have identified their own acquittal with the conviction of the insurgents, he maintains that both may be guilty: the Government for neglect, delay, and mismanagement; the insurgents for rising in rebellion and inciting the Indians to rise. To each, therefore, ought to be assigned their due share of fault: that of the insurgents is known, and it is a fit subject of Parliamentary enquiry to ascertain what extent of guilt, if any, attaches to Government.

It is satisfactory to learn that Mr. Blake does not contemplate a retirement from the leadership of the Liberal Party. Not since Con-

federation has that party been in a position where it might be so useful to the country. In Mr. Blake it possesses a leader who stands almost alone among Canadian statesmen for high principle and character; and at this conjuncture it is precisely such qualities that are most needed. To such a man the lower side of politics cannot but be distasteful, and he tells us that he dislikes and does not wish for office. But, although this unwillingness springs from an honourable scrupulousness, it is regrettable, for it is not an attitude of mind suitable to the leader of a great party. Not so do successful leaders inspire their followers and seize victory. Yet, perhaps, the enthusiasm will come with the occasion. Possibly it is better, as Mr. Blake says, that the Liberal Party should not take office just yet; and certainly it is the case that if by the aid of the French-Canadian malcontent Tories they should defeat the Government on the question of the execution of Riel, no stable political alliance could be formed on such a basis: no lasting coalition could spring merely from a community of feeling in regard to an execution. The construction of a Liberal-Bleu platform out of the Regina scaffold might admirably serve the purpose of the Government, by affording them a cry on which they could confidently appeal to five-sixths of the country for support—they might like to make this an issue before the English-speaking populations; but Mr. Blake refuses to let them choose the matter for which they must soon be tried. He quietly sets this issue aside as but a subordinate question, and fixes the attention of the country on the more permanent and substantial questions calling for legislative and administrative action, upon the main question in this North-West business—the causes that produced, not the consequences that followed, the Rebellion. In this, the main conclusion of his speech, he has crowned a wise and admirable utterance in a statesman-like manner, and it will, if we mistake not, be found that when the day of trial comes his motion for a full enquiry will receive the support of all honest and conscientious persons of both parties.

At the Blake banquet Mr. Mills made a fierce onslaught on independent journalism, which appears in some way to have crossed his political path. He seems to think that a writer who is independent can have no convictions. This is the common notion of partisans, but it is rather surprising to see it shared by a philosopher. With regard to every subject but politics Mr. Mills would probably admit that independence of mind is essential to the existence of anything worthy of the name of conviction. If a political economist or a man of science were to enlist in an economical or scientific party, and adopt its opinions wholesale, you would say that he had no convictions but only prejudices. It is possible, surely, that a man may agree with one part of the policy of a Government and disagree with another; that he may agree with its fiscal policy, for example, while he disagrees with its policy respecting the franchise. Suppose he frankly avows this, and praises or blames the Government accordingly, can he be said to be wanting in conviction, or in the expression of it, more than the partisan who in both cases takes, as a matter of course, the Government or the Opposition view? Independence of mind, in men or in journals, is very inconvenient to party managers: that is what Mr. Mills means.

It is stated that M. de Lesseps having failed to get a loan from the French Government, or even a permit to raise money by lottery, to carry on the work of the Panama Canal, has induced the Government to send an engineer to the Isthmus to examine the work already done, and to report upon the scheme as an investment. M. Rousseau, the engineer, starts presently, and lest he should form an unfavourable opinion of the scheme from lack of information, M. de Lesseps has arranged a contemporaneous excursion to the same place, at the Company's expense, of politicians, journalists, and financial men interested in the project. We also read that at the housewarming of his new splendid residence in Paris the other day M. de Lesseps made a witty speech, in the course of which he declared that the French investments in the Suez Canal had been returned tenfold, and the Panama Canal will be equally fruitful. Well, it is always best to keep up a light heart in difficulties; but if the Panama Canal project is in anything like the state it is represented to be in by the report of Mr. J. C. Rodrigues, a commissioner appointed in 1879 by the New York *World* to go to Panama to study the enterprise on the spot, the gaiety of this brilliant Frenchman has something of heartlessness in it. The London *Athenaeum* in reviewing the report assents with but little reserve to the conclusions of the Commissioner; and if these conclusions be correct, then is the Panama Canal scheme far from being a fit subject for witty speeches. From the review of the report—which, having been published in book form, has come under the notice of the *Athenaeum*—we gather in brief that the original estimate of the cost of the work—the estimate on which it was undertaken—has in consequence of later and better information grown in quantity of excavation from