that, as seems to be insinuated, a fictitious Bill of Rights could have been substituted by the delegates for that given them by the Council of the Provisional Government. Nothing but the clearest demonstrative evidence could justify such a supposition. It is now evident that several Bills of Rights were prepared by different parties claiming to represent the Red River people, and that the first draft prepared—that of which the original is in the keeping of the Society represented by Professor Bryce—was materially changed before being submitted by the delegates, by what right or authority remains to be seen. We await more light.

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THE letter of the Hon. H. G. Joly, which recently appeared in the Montreal *Witness*, on the religious and racial agitations now going on in Ontario and Quebec, is an important though, perhaps, rather tardy contribution to the discussion. The eminently judicial tone of Mr. Joly's communication, its political sagacity, and the weight of the writer's personal influence, all combine to prompt the wish that the writer had put his views before the public at an earlier stage of the controversy. Perhaps, however, it may not yet be too late for the more fair-minded among the agitators to pause and re-consider the question of the Jesuits' Estates Bill on its merits. Mr. Joly firmly believes that the nature of that Bill is not well understood by those who condemn it so absolutely. In justifying this opinion he points out several features of the Bill which he thinks are being continually though not intentionally misrepresented. The views he expresses may not be absolutely new, but they come with new and exceptional force from the pen of the veteran French-Canadian statesman. Most of them are, in substance, the same which have been from time to time presented in these columns. He asks, for instance, why the opponents of the Bill should constantly represent the payment of the $400,000 as an endowment instead of calling it what it really is, the settlement of a long-pending claim. "It is perfectly fair," says Mr. Joly, "to attack the validity of the claim, but the existence of the claim ought not to be ignored." He also argues that it is a misstatement to say that the property in question was confiscated. If it had been confiscated by the crown for some political offence, the affair would have a very different aspect. But, as a matter of fact, the property originally became vested in the crown by the law of escheat, in consequence of the suppression of the Jesuits by the Pope, and not by any law or act of confiscation. In regard to the introduction of the name of the Pope so freely into the preamble, Mr. Joly is still more emphatic. "Had I been," he says, "a member of the Legislature at the time, if the name of the Pope and his consent to the settlement had been omitted, I would have insisted upon their being entered into the bill before allowing it to pass." He would have done this on the obvious legal ground that, just as in a bargain with any commercial or other corporation, the contract, in order to be legally binding, must have the sanction of the proper authorities, so it would have been an inexcusable oversight to neglect obtaining the sanction of the supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, without which no settlement could be considered as final. Mr. Joly even intimates that, from the legal point of view, a great portion of the contents of the preamble, "which appears, at first sight, either out of place and objectionable, or superfluous," should rather be regarded "as evidence of the minute precautions taken to secure a valid and final discharge and settlement for the Province of Quebec." Though Mr. Joly is not oblivious to the fact that the majority in the Province of Quebec have given their friends of other origin and creed fair grounds for suspicion, it may be questioned whether he fully apprehends the divisive and dangerous nature of the Nationalist movement among his fellow-countrymen, or realizes the extent to which the Equal Rights agitation is a counter-blast to that movement. It is greatly to be desired that Mr. Joly and others like-minded amongst French-Canadian leaders could bring their fellow-countrymen to see clearly that, so long as any influential portion of the people of French origin continue to cherish the dream of an independent French nationality on Canadian soil, so long there can be no return to the confidence and good-fellowship essential to the unity and concord Mr. Joly so ardently desires.

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IF newspaper reports touching negotiations said to be in progress, on behalf of an English syndicate, aiming to secure control of the wholesale grocery trade of Canada, be confirmed, the time is evidently near when some decisive steps will need to be taken to determine the status of the "Trust" in Canada. The idea of permitting this immense business to be brought under the management of a monopoly, on the tender mercies of which the whole population of Canada would thereafter be dependent for these commonest necessaries of life, is intolerable. We cannot suppose that the people would submit to anything of the kind. At the same time, as we have on former occasions pointed out, there is another side to the Trust discussion which is well worthy of more consideration than it has yet received. It is undoubtedly true that a strong syndicate, representing capitalists of undoubted standing and ample resources, would be able to procure the vast amount of capital required for carrying on the business at very much lower rates than at present prevail. It is equally true that the present competitive methods are clumsy and enormously wasteful. Unity of management would be able to effect a very great saving in these two directions, to say nothing of other advantages. If by some means this saving could be effected in such a way that the consumers, whose interests should be the first and ruling consideration, could be assured of the benefit, in the shape of reduced prices, the change would be in the right direction, and worthy of the intelligence of the age. But if such a consummation is utterly visionary, it is evident that the sooner decisive measures are taken to protect the interests of the people against selfish monopolies the better. Even from the point of view of the optimist, who looks forward to a radical reform of the present competitive system in trade, and expects to see it superseded by one more rational and less wasteful, it is quite possible that to place a decided and effective check upon the operations of selfish monopolists may be a necessary first step. This seems likely to be done in the United States. The proceedings against the Sugar Trust are being pushed with great vigour and thus far with success. Another step has just now been taken. The Receiver of the North Sugar Refining Company has filed a petition in the Supreme Court for an injunction restraining the companies and individuals cited as members of the Trust from making any further payments out of the assets of the co-partnership to any persons under the guise of dividends, or from otherwise disposing of the assets of the co partnership. This petition is a consequence of the unfavourable decisions already pronounced against the Trust. Its effect, if granted, as it probably will be, will be to prevent the various holders of the certificates of the Trust from receiving any returns pending the decision of an action for dissolution of partnership. These certificates, which were received in lieu of the stock surrendered by the various companies and stockholders to the Trust, have, it has already been decided, no legal value. It is thought probable that other adverse decisions will shortly be given in cases now pending, and that the next step will be to "wind up" the business, sell the refinery property under the hammer, and lodge the proceeds with the Court for distribution to the rightful owners, when these are legally ascertained.

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IT is never safe to judge of the ultimate results of new inventions from the first experimental applications. The *Spectator* thinks that though such vessels as the *Gymnote*, which on the 22nd of December plunged under the waters of the harbour of Toulon until it became invisible, and then traversed and retraversed the harbour, guided and controlled by the crew of four men on board, may be used for a variety of purposes, such as submarine exploration and the rescue of submerged treasure, they do not as yet promise much aid in the art of destruction. Most persons will, we think, deem such a conclusion exceedingly rash. It may or may not be that the *Gymnote*, "if used as a ram," as Jules Verne suggested, "would crush her crew as well as the enemy," but it by no means follows that she could not, in many ways less hazardous to her occupants and manipulators, accomplish destructive results. It would certainly add a new and untold terror to the dangers of marine warfare, if the crews of an attacking squadron were to realize that, for all they could know to the contrary, a gigantic "electric eel," half a hundred feet in length and well supplied with the tremendous forces which modern science knows so well how to bottle up and let loose at will in volcanic explosions, might be at any moment moving beneath their keels. It is pretty safe to say that to perfect the invention of such a submarine vessel capable of being propelled and intelligently guided under water, with safety to its crew, would go far to revolutionize modern marine warfare and render the navies now equipped at fabulous cost comparatively useless. It is doubtful whether steel-clad steamships, and torpedo boats and dynamite guns, and other modern devices, would not all dwindle into insignificance in the presence of such a submarine monster.

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THE litigation now being carried on in the New York Courts, to test the legality of the Act providing for execution by electricity instead of by hanging, has advanced a stage. In the action taken to inhibit the use of the proposed method on the ground that it would be "cruel and unusual," the judge before whom the case was first brought decided that there is at present no judicial knowledge that death by electricity is so prolonged and painful as to justify the courts in holding it to be a "cruel and unusual" mode of punishment. That decision has now been affirmed by a General Term of the New York Supreme Court. The judgment of the latter court was that although the method now prescribed by law was in a sense unusual, there was no common knowledge that it is cruel. As a matter of fact the evidence attainable all pointed the other way. It is understood that there will be an appeal from this decision, but it is thought that it will be sustained by the court of last resort. In that case the result of the first application of the new agency for inflicting capital punishment will be awaited with an interest far deeper than that of mere curiosity. If capital punishment is necessary to the protection of society and the well-being of the State, it is high time modern civilization and science had found some less revolting mode of inflicting it, than by the old process of hanging. This method of ridding the world of those who have forfeited the right to live is peculiarly shocking at the best, and when bunglingly performed, as seems to be now almost the rule, becomes horrible beyond description. This frequent bungling is really due to the natural reluctance of the officers who are actually responsible for carrying into effect the death sentence to have anything to do personally with its infliction. Hence the painful task has to be entrusted to such agents as are procurable for such a purpose, and these are, naturally enough, often seriously deficient in intelligence and skill. It is clear that if capital punishment is to be continued means must be found to have the final act of the tragedy performed by unconscious agents, and to make the personal act of the executioner as slight and indirect as possible. Thus the conditions of the problem seem almost to suggest electricity at once as the subtle force by whose agency the task of the operator may be reduced to the minimum, such as the mere touching of a button. If, as there seems every reason to expect, the electric current should prove to be a reliable and instantaneous means of causing death, its adoption in all civilized communities, where capital punishment is retained, will be certain and speedy.

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WHETHER and to what extent a country which prides itself on having the freest institutions in the world, can justify itself in adopting measures designed to restrict immigration is, to say the least, a doubtful question. Theoretically it seems hard to defend such a course as consistent with genuine freedom of government. Still, to those familiar with the evils that have been produced in the United States as the result of the free admission of the pauper and criminal classes of the old world, it is not surprising that there is a popular outcry for restrictive legislation. Congress affirmed the principle involved when, some years ago, it passed the Anti-Chinese and Contract Labour Bills. This year a measure is to be brought before it, the object of which is to extend the principle of exclusion to certain classes of foreigners who certainly do make almost as undesirable citizens as the Celestials. This Bill, which is to be introduced by Congressman Oates, of Alabama, provides among other things, for the inspection of intending immigrants by American Consuls abroad—a plan which may perhaps prove feasible, though it certainly has its difficulties, and bids fair to make the positions of some of those consuls anything but sinecures. The Bill contains also some clauses intended to make more stringent the conditions under which aliens may become citizens of the United States. As to the wisdom and desirableness of some of the proposed restrictions there is little room for difference of opinion. Naturalization is to be refused to those who have been convicted of serious crime or misdemeanour, to those who cannot speak and read the English language, and to polygamists, anarchists, socialists and communists, and members of societies composed of such persons. These latter precautions may be to a certain extent necessary, but it must be admitted that to make an article of creed or membership of a society not necessarily treasonable a bar to nationalization is to introduce a somewhat doubtful if not dangerous principle into the national legislation. The