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WE are glad that there is some reason to hope that a place of compromise has been or may be found between the City Council and its efficient engineer. It would, in our opinion, be little less than a calamity should Mr. Jennings feel compelled to insist on the acceptance of his resignation. Were the question at issue that of fixing the amount of money to be spent in the Works Department of the city, the Council would clearly be justified, as the body directly responsible to the taxpayers, in insisting upon its right to limit that amount. Were the question even one of determining the general character of the works which should be undertaken, it would still be the duty of the Council to insist upon its right of saying what those works should be. But when it is merely a question of the efficient use of the money voted by the Council for the carrying on of the improvements resolved upon by the Council, we do not see how any conscientious engineer, especially one having a reputation to maintain, could be content with less than the power to choose and appoint his own subordinates and to fix their respective salaries. This power is clearly indispensable to the highest efficiency of the head of any such department. Without it the chief cannot have the necessary control. There would be an obvious and grave injustice in holding the head engineer responsible for the efficiency of assistants on any other principle. As Mr. Goldwin Smith pointed out at the Board of Trade meeting, the Council ought to control the gross sum to be spent, but the engineer should have the distribution of the amount amongst the staff. In this way the rights and responsibilities of both parties are respected. As Mr. Smith further showed the analogy between the position of a City engineer and that of a Government engineer does not hold good, in view of the more permanent tenure of office of the Responsible Government. We should, however, be disposed to go further and to maintain that one of the chief sources of waste, extravagance and corruption in Government offices would be removed were an end put to political influence in appointments and the working of the departments entrusted to competent non-partisan heads, entrusted with all necessary powers

and held strictly accountable for results. This is, we venture to say, the method that is found to work best in large private establishments. The City Council of Toronto is to be congratulated upon having it in their power to retain the services of an engineer who has clearness of head to see what is necessary and firmness of purpose to insist upon it. The plan proposed at the conference between the Special Committee and Mr. Jennings, pledging the Council not to put the law in force and the engineer to make no further advances in salaries pending the action of the new Council, seems fair to both and compromises the dignity of neither. It has the merit, too, of giving the citizens, who are really the party interested, an opportunity to pronounce upon the question. We hope that it may be accepted as a present settlement of the difficulty.

IT was but natural that the speeches on the occasion of the first convocation in the restored University of Toronto should have been pitched on a key of congratulation and hopefulness. The many tokens of practical sympathy that have been called forth by the appalling disaster which laid the old building in ruins, and the success which has rewarded the energetic efforts of the President and other officers and friends of the institution, as seen in the great additions and improvements now approaching completion, afford ample grounds for confidence in the future of the Provincial University. It was but natural that the venerable President, who has been during so long a period so closely identified with the history of the University, should have been led to make the past, as well as the present and the future, tributary to the stream of his flowing eloquence. The true friends of higher education will not care at such a moment to be critical, else they might be disposed to remind the audience, few of whom probably have made themselves familiar with those earlier chapters in our educational history, that the narrow, inefficient, sectarian and exclusive college whose revenues, derived from the Provincial domain, it was at one time proposed to distribute among institutions representing the different sections of the people, was an entirely different institution from the Provincial University of to-day. The question was one between dissecting and regenerating a barren and effete corporation. Happily, in the opinion of the majority, regeneration through reorganization was found possible. Were the friends of the still existing and, in some measure at least, flourishing independent colleges actuated, as we trust they are not, by narrow jealousies, they might perhaps discover a sneer, which we feel sure was not intended, in Sir Daniel Wilson's allusion to "the mischievous results" Sir Edmund Head foresaw as "involved in the perpetuation of a number of poorly equipped colleges, wasting inadequate resources in duplicating professorships, and expending their energies in a way that threatened to transform the Tree of Knowledge into a Upas tree, with its fruitage of embittered jealousies to turn to ashes on their lips." The allusion is no doubt meant to be purely historical (the reporter is probably responsible for putting the fruit on the wrong tree) and, as such, is adapted to make us all thankful that those embittered jealousies have so happily passed away and that all the voluntary institutions can now work in cordial unison, or generous rivalry, with each other and with the State-endowed University, in the interests of higher education. It is by no means clear that the Province is not the better rather than the worse, that those of its sons and daughters who are ambitious of thorough culture are not necessarily all put into the one educational mould. While the presence of the more richly endowed Provincial University will always have the effect of putting the smaller institutions upon their mettle and compelling them to set their standards high, no very keen historical penetration is necessary to discover that these, in their turn, have brought and are bringing to bear a most healthful and stimulating influence upon their wealthy rival. A cynic might be tempted to add that if the Colleges are at a disadvantage in having "no Minister with whom they can take friendly counsel, nor anyone to be sensitive over the responsibilities or rights of an educational department," they have at least the compensating advantage of being able to appoint a librarian or other College officer, without

having the office canvassed for as the perquisite of a party, or the appointment taken out of the hands of the proper Academic authorities, and held up, as a little prize, in the political arena. But away with odious comparisons. We are of the number of those who believe that, even in Ontario, there is room enough for all, and that by their friendly rivalry, working along different lines and by various methods, far better results will be reached on the whole than could be brought about by the uniformity and possible lethargy of a single University, however richly endowed.

ONE of the most important movements of the recent session was the adoption, at the instance of the Government, of the address to Her Majesty the Queen, asking that Canada be set free from the operation of the "most favoured nation" clauses in the treaties with Germany and Belgium. Whether or not this action on the part of the Government is, as Mr. Laurier seemed to think, a logical step in the direction of the Liberal policy of claiming for Canada the right to negotiate her own commercial treaties or not, it is certainly a step in the direction of freeing her from a restriction which seriously hampers her movements and may, at any time, become a source of embarrassment and injury. We wish that we could be more sanguine of the success of the petition. We fear that the British Government will be slow to risk the abrogation of the treaties in question for the sake of freeing the Colonies from the operation of a single clause. We are no admirers of the policy of preferential trade arrangements, in the abstract, but such arrangements seem to be becoming the fashion, and the time may come when the power to make some such arrangement may be a necessity to the commercial well-being of Canada. It was noteworthy that the leaders of both parties were at one with regard to the thing sought, though their aim in seeking the release differed widely, and though the Liberals took exception to the wording of certain clauses, which affirmed, as they contended, heretical *doctrinaire* declarations. The unanimity of the House in regard to the prayer of the petition will, no doubt, greatly increase its weight with the British Government.

ONE of the last and best bits of legislation of the late session of Parliament was the amendment of the Frauds Bill by adding a clause providing that no Government contractor, or person supplying the Government with goods, or person having unsettled claims against the Government, can contribute to any political fund without coming under the penalties provided in the Bill. This is in direct line with what was advocated in THE WEEK which a respected contributor thought would be "heroic treatment" indeed. There is really, when we come to consider the matter, no reason that can be urged in support of the clause of the Act which forbids the bestowal of gifts or commissions upon officials of the Department by persons doing business with them, which is not equally valid against contributing to election funds for the support of the Government party by persons doing business with the Government. The cases are parallel. The Government, like the official, is in a position of trust. Nothing is more common than to hear praise given to the members of a Government for its liberality in contributing to this or that object, or making this or that appropriation, as if the money bestowed were their own, or at their absolute disposal. When we take into account the true position of the Government as the agents of the people, the trusted custodians of the public funds, bound by every consideration of honesty and honour to make every purchase and use every dollar conscientiously in what they believe to be the public interests, "without fear, favour or affection," we can at once see the propriety and necessity for such legislation. No one who knows anything of the intensity of the party spirit in Canadian politics, or realizes the part played by the party organization and the party fund, can fail to see that the moment a Minister permits a contractor, merchant, or other person with whom he has dealings in his capacity as trustee of the people, to become a contributor to the party funds, that moment he places himself under a compliment which must more or less affect his freedom in all future dealings with that individual. On