

many of whom are themselves destitute even of respectable educational qualifications. Reference was made in these columns some weeks since to a rumour which had become current to the effect that, in view of the serious injury to public education resulting from this immaturity of teachers, the Department proposed to raise the minimum age of eligibility for a teacher's certificate to twenty-one. We regret to learn from a recent announcement that this very desirable reform is deemed impracticable, and that at the best the minimum age will not be fixed at a higher point than eighteen. While appreciating the difficulties in the way of making radical changes at short notice, we may venture to say—and we feel sure that we shall voice the opinions of many of our foremost educators in so doing—that if the reform of which Mr. Kirkland speaks is to come within the ten years the sanguine Minister assigns for it, it is high time that the Education Department should be preparing the public, not only for a marked advance in the age at which certificates may be granted, but for such a raising of the standard of qualification in other respects as will do away with third-class certificates *in toto*. Nothing short of this will bring the system within reasonable distance of any high standard.

THE unseating of Mr. Stinson, the Opposition member for Hamilton in the Local Legislature, is an act of political justice in which all honest men of both parties should acquiesce. The fraudulent procuring of alien votes is a species of corruption of a dangerous as well as unprincipled kind and cannot be too severely reprobated. On the other hand the disgraceful document which has been brought to light, in which Mr. P. J. Brown, an agent of the Government candidate, agreed to pay Col. Collier \$500, to protect him from criminal proceedings and to secure the revival of certain railway charters, in consideration of the delivery of a book containing the names of persons whose evidence was required, is well calculated to put to the test the sincerity of the Government's professions of purity. The fact that Mr. Brown has since received a Government appointment has a very suspicious appearance. His undertakings in regard to the criminal proceedings and the lapsed railway charters point directly to a kind of traffic in Government influence and patronage which the Liberal Opposition in Dominion politics has been ardent—though not a whit too ardent—in denouncing. Surely if Mr. Mowat and his colleagues had no knowledge or suspicion of such a transaction when Mr. Brown received his appointment, they will hasten now to mark their disapprobation of conduct which was not only dishonest in itself, but insulting to them. We could have wished to see the party papers on both sides less ingenious in minimizing and more outspoken in denouncing the guilt of their respective partisans, in the various cases which have come before the courts.

RUMOURS of an immediate dissolution of the House of Commons are becoming so persistent and so definite that it seems almost impossible that they can be wholly baseless. It is pretty certain that the question is at least under consideration by the Government, and it is quite possible that an immediate appeal to the constituencies may have been already decided on. If this be the case it follows that there must be now some special reason for the dissolution which did not exist a year ago, or even a few months ago, when Government assurances were given that no such action was contemplated. That special reason will no doubt appear in some proposals or correspondence looking to some measure of reciprocity with the United States. In the political history of England as well as of Canada instances are not wanting in which a Government has thus forestalled its opponents by adopting the most popular portions of their policies. The well-worn *bon mot* which represents one party as catching the other bathing and running off with its clothes will hardly apply here, seeing that the Opposition is just now particularly active. The main point, however, and that which the people will anxiously consider, is that which relates to the nature and extent of the proposed scheme of reciprocity. In regard to this we are as yet wholly in the dark. On the one hand, the present Government and the Conservative party are very strongly committed against unrestricted reciprocity and, indeed, any form of commercial freedom which fails to protect Canadian manufactures. On the other hand, it is equally certain that the United States will accept no arrangement which does not open at least some wide channels for the disposal of its manufactured products. The people will if they are wise, insist on having some definite assurances in this matter before depositing their ballots. Those of them

who favour a large measure of free exchange, and those who will consent to exchange of natural productions only, will alike object to voting in the dark, only to find, perhaps, that no scheme of reciprocity can be agreed on, and that the whole result of the election has been to give to the Government a new term of office. As to the question of premature dissolution itself, it is passing strange to see Liberal journals calling on the Governor-General to act on his own responsibility and refuse to follow the advice of his advisers. Were the circumstances reversed, the Liberals would themselves be the first to cry out, and justly too, against any such exercise of Imperial prerogative. The boon of responsible government was too hardly won to be given up so easily. It might be very annoying to see a Government snatch another term of office by such a procedure, but the remedy is in the hands of the people themselves. If they do not choose to apply it, they must be educated up to a better sense of duty. To take refuge from the action of a Government responsible to the people, in the prerogative of an officer appointed by the Crown would be retrogression indeed.

AS the limit of time within which the Dominion Government may veto the Manitoba School Act is approached, signs of a growing agitation in the Province of Quebec in favour of disallowance are making themselves visible. The question of the constitutionality of the Act is now before the highest Manitoba Court under appeal from the decision of the lower court, which pronounced it *intra vires*. Should the Appellate Court take the same view, resort will no doubt be had to the Dominion Supreme Court, and failing that, very likely to the ultimate authority, the British Privy Council. But the year within which the veto may be used will have expired long before the final decision can be had from the higher courts. It is evident, therefore, that the safer course for the opponents of the Act is to obtain, if possible, the intervention of the veto, since, otherwise, should the courts agree in pronouncing the measure *intra vires* of the Manitoba Legislature, there will be left no means of barring its operation except, perhaps, the difficult and unpromising one of obtaining remedial legislation from Parliament. Under these circumstances it does not seem unlikely that there may be truth in the rumour which represents Sir Hector Langevin as bringing all his influence to bear upon his colleagues, on behalf of disallowance. There are, at all events, indications, as we have said, that an active and powerful crusade is being commenced in the French Province. The position of the Government in the matter, assuming that it is more concerned to secure its own safety than to conserve the rights of any province, will be a very difficult one. If, on the other hand, it is able to disregard all secondary influences and decide the question solely on its merits, its course must be moderately clear. Its eye being single, the light can scarcely be wanting. It is not easy to understand how any independent judgment can doubt for a moment the right of both the Manitoba Legislature and the North-West Council, in accordance with the broad principles and the spirit of the Confederation, to shake from their shoulders an incubus which should never have been laid upon them and which serves only to retard their progress. Whatever may have been the expectation at the time the Manitoba Act was passed, no valid argument can now be found in the present or the prospective conditions of population either in Manitoba or in the North-West Territory, for perpetuating the costly and grievous anomalies of Separate Schools and dual languages. On precisely the same grounds on which we maintained the right of the Quebec Legislature to pass the Jesuits' Estates Act, we feel bound to uphold the legislative autonomy of the young Province and Territory in this matter.

WHY should a university course be limited to the traditional four years, or even, as in the case of a few innovators, to three, as the *minimum* length of study entitling the student to any distinct recognition? Why should the student who succeeds in passing a final examination at the end of that period be granted a certificate, or degree, carrying with it a definite, recognized value as a mark of scholarship, while his fellows who pass examinations representing three years, or two years, or one year of equally successful study, receive nothing? Why should so much greater encouragement be held out, under this arrangement, to those young men and young women who may be able to spend four years at college, than to those who may be able to spend only three years, or two, or

one? The inherent defects in this system, tending as it does to create a great educational gulf between the few who are able to take the full college course, and the many who are unable to do so, have for many years past been coming to be more clearly recognized. Many changes tending in the direction of reform have been made. Such institutions as London University and such arrangements as the university extension scheme, which is being so usefully and successfully carried out by Oxford and Cambridge, have been working steadily in the direction of a great educational revolution. In the United States the Chautauqua and Correspondence systems, and in our own Province the university local examinations have to a certain extent recognized the existence of a want, and have done something to relax or to counteract the rigidity of the old system. It may be hoped that the university extension scheme now under consideration by the Senate of the university of Toronto may be speedily inaugurated and help forward the much needed movement. The germinal principle of coming changes is found in the recognition of the great fact that the spirit of our times demands not so much special facilities for the highest culture of a select few—though this is not excluded—as the broadest opportunities for the literary and scientific education of the many. The university of the future, it is safe to say, must be not an academic cloister but an educational propaganda—a radiating centre of stimulating intellectual influences. By far the boldest proposal that has as yet been made in this direction is that of Professor Harper, the prospective President of the new Chicago university. This scheme is startling in the number and radicalism of the innovations proposed. In addition to the various colleges of liberal arts, science, practical arts and literature within the university, and graduating and professional schools after the most approved modern patterns, it contemplates university extension work and university publication work, on scales of magnitude hitherto unattempted, at least on this continent. Connected with these is a system of academies in different states, probably to develop as “feeders” of the central institution, as well as to act as local centres for the diffusion of its advantages. The university extension work will include regular courses of lectures in and about Chicago, evening courses in appropriate subjects for men and women with limited time at their disposal, correspondence courses for students in every section of the country, special courses in scientific Bible study, and library extension in connection with the other forms of work. But it is in relation to the regular college courses that the most startling innovations are proposed. There will be four terms in the year, each of twelve weeks, and students may take any one term as their vacation, regardless of their fellows in the matter. No classes will exist as such, and diplomas will be granted not when a man has been in attendance for a certain period, but when he has done a certain amount of work. Thus the convenience of students of all classes and conditions will be consulted. Everyone who can manage to attend for a single twelve-weeks' term in the year may do so, as we understand the scheme, with the assurance that he shall have every facility for pursuing whatever studies he may select, and that the work actually done will receive full recognition, both in itself, and as an integral part of any whole which he may afterward complete. These are but a few of the many novel pictures of the scheme which has been outlined by Professor Harper, and with which many of our readers are doubtless already familiar. The remarkable unanimity with which the scheme has been approved by American educators shows that it is adapted to meet an existing and felt want.

THOUGH we do not at present know precisely the results of the recent visit of Prince Edward Island representatives to Ottawa, or how definite were the assurances they were able to carry back with them from the Government leaders, to their compatriots, it is evident that the question of a submarine tunnel between the Island and the mainland must very shortly emerge into the region of “practical politics.” It is now passing through the preliminary stages by which all such large projects have to make their way. Its day of ridicule is past. It is no longer deemed sufficient to label it “utopian.” The people of the Island and their representatives in Parliament have, it must be admitted, exercised admirable patience in the matter. As is well known the Island Assembly's very decisive rejection of the Confederation scheme when first proposed in 1866 was based on the assumed impossibility that any terms of union could prove advantageous to the interests and well-being of