

Mother England, it seems, declines to meet her colonies on equal terms in the approaching Conference. She sends the Earl of Jersey simply to listen to what her children have to say to each other and to report. This must be rather disappointing, though it is perhaps all that could reasonably be expected at this stage of the proceedings. We certainly should not have expected more had anyone other than Lord Rosebery been Premier. Meanwhile, one is curious to know whence Mr. James F. Hogan, M.P., derived his information, if he is correctly reported as implying, if not directly asserting, the willingness of the colonies "to contribute their share of the expenses of the defence of the Empire." It is possible that the question was put in the form of a hypothesis. Certainly no one has as yet been empowered to give assurance of any such willingness on the part of Canada. We have not hesitated to express the opinion that the continued acceptance of and reliance on the protection of the Imperial navy involve the moral obligation to bear a share of its cost, under just conditions of management and control. Yet such an agreement involves possibilities so great and so far-reaching that it is doubtful whether even any Parliament, not elected with that as one of the chief issues, would be justified or safe in committing the Dominion to it. It is pre-eminently a people's question. The fact of such a question being thus put in the British Parliament goes far to confirm our surmise that the appearance of the Defence Committee's pamphlet at this particular juncture may be more than a mere chance coincidence, and that the question of colonial contributions to the support of the navy is one which will have to be answered at no distant day.

Very many Canadians in other Provinces as well as in Ontario will, we believe, be sorry that the Dominion Government persists in its resolve to sell the greater number of the Thousand Islands at public auction. Future owners, it is true, no matter who they may be, cannot remove the Islands, or greatly mar the picturesque beauty which has made this part of the St. Lawrence so deservedly famous. But they can, and in most cases no doubt will, effectually bar the public, whether Canadians or foreign travellers, from free access to these charming places of resort. The short debate over the question in the Commons furnishes another illustration of the injury done to the interests of the country by the intensity of party feeling. It can scarcely be doubted that had the Governments of the Dominion and of Ontario been of the same political stripe, the request made on behalf of the latter for delay to give opportunity to obtain a vote for the purchase of the Islands for the Provincial Park, would have been granted. There may be force in the objection of the Federal Government to

the proposal that the Islands should be purchased jointly by the two Governments, for the purpose of being made a national park; that if the Dominion provided a park for one Province, it would be expected to do so for others, though there is but one such spot in the Dominion, and it is as central as could be desired. But no great interest could have suffered from granting the delay asked. It is still to be hoped that the Ontario Government will find some way of meeting the difficulty and making the purchase, which would surely be a very safe one at the upset price named, and thus save the people of the country from the humiliation of seeing themselves shut out from the greater number of these beautiful Islands, and a foreign flag flying over many of them.

Sir William Harcourt's statement in reply to a question in the Commons that the imposition of death or estate dues has nothing to do with the receipt of money from the Colonies for national defence is so obvious that one wonders that a supposed willingness to pay the one could be thought of as a reason for asking exemption from the other. The question of exacting dues for property in the Colonies must clearly stand by itself. It is one of those questions in regard to which so much can be said upon both sides that one would like to hear an argument by competent jurists upon the abstract right and wrong of the thing before forming his own conclusion. It is easy to understand what is, we suppose, the view of the British Chancellor. Property is property, whether it is held in the form of landed estates at home, or in that of title-deeds of landed property abroad. To admit that a capitalist may escape taxation, or some special form of taxation, of his capital, by simply investing it in one of the colonies, carries with it the possibility that England's wealthiest men might relieve themselves from the necessity of making any contribution to the national treasury by investing in the colonies, while enjoying their full share of the benefits resulting from the taxation of those investing in property at home. On the other hand, nothing seems clearer than that property of all kinds, and especially landed estate, should bear its burden of taxation for public purposes in the country in which it is situated. No colony could afford to exempt a given estate from its share of taxation because it was owned in England, and subject to a similar tax there. It is easy to see, though that does not, we suppose, affect the principle of the thing, that the tax proposed by Sir William Harcourt will tend directly to discourage the investment of British capital in the Colonies, where it is so much needed. The subject is a delicate one and will need to be carefully handled.

The calendar of the School of Mining and Agriculture at Kingston, Ont., is now

before us. This institution has not yet been long enough in operation to have made a record for itself. It must therefore for the present be judged by what it proposes to do, and by the equipment which it has for doing that work. On this ground there seems little to be desired, for a vigorous commencement, at least. The Board of Governors is made up of gentlemen representing both political parties—pity 'tis that it should be necessary to mention that fact—most or all of whom are widely and favourably known, not only locally but throughout the Province. The faculty, too, contains names which will be generally accepted as a guarantee for the quality of the work that is to be done in the institution, while the four years' course laid out covers all the ground necessary to equip the student who follows it faithfully for the degree of Mining Engineer, which is the goal set before him. From whatever point of view the location is regarded, it is difficult to see how one more suitable could have been chosen. The place is central for the Eastern half of the Province, for whose benefit the school is, we suppose, intended. The situation in relation to the mineral deposits and the facilities they afford for practical work is good, while touching political, or rather party considerations, the fact, for such it is if memory serves us, that it was approved in the Provincial Legislature without a division sufficiently attests the propriety of the choice. Of course the school is now challenged in some of these respects, but the same objections which are now being urged would have been available, and would no doubt have been made during the heat of a political contest, had it been placed at any other imaginable point in the Province. As to the principle involved in the aid granted to supplement local contributions, suffice it to say that if Provincial aid should ever be given in aid of any institution whose chief aim is to prepare men for a learned profession, such a school as this should have it. If successful it can hardly fail to repay the Province a hundred fold in the future for its moderate annual outlay.

POLITICAL AMENITIES AND ARTIFICES.

The electoral contest now raging—we do not suppose that is too strong a word to characterize many of its phases—seems to be developing even more than the usual amount of regrettable incidents and revelations. To confine attention for the moment to this city; there seemed good reason to hope at the outset, from the high standing and characters of the candidates on both sides, that the appeal made by one of the party journals at the outset for "a decent campaign" would be responded to by all concerned. The expectation, it should be said, has been fully realized so far as the candidates themselves are concerned. Their references to their opponents, so far as we