

CONSTITUTIONAL.

The Toronto Globe in discussing the constitutional question, says: "The contention of the Governor-General was, that under the peculiar circumstances of the present case the powers of the retiring Administration ought to have been confined to the transaction of all necessary business, while it was a further duty to avoid all which might embarrass the succeeding Government. Without entering at present into the question of constitutional precedents this view would appear to be in accordance with common sense."

Does not the Globe here avoid the very pith and marrow of the question? Was the Governor-General at liberty to act according to what he considered common sense? Was he not bound to go according to precedent? The relations between the Governor-General and his Cabinet are not defined by law. Almost everything in his dealings with his ministry is settled according to precedent and usage. The private opinions of the Governor-General and his ideas of common sense appear to have very little to do with the matter. Lord Dufferin, who knew as much about the position of a Governor-General and what he ought to say and do in all matters that relate to the public, said in one of his speeches: "As you are well aware, in all those matters which are of real and vital moment to you I am only entitled to repeat in public such words of wisdom as my Ottawa Egerias may put into my mouth."

This does not appear to be common sense, for Lord Dufferin might be wiser, clearer-headed and more disinterested than his ministers, and consequently better fitted to give an opinion or to come to a decision on the subject at the moment under consideration. But though so well qualified to speak, he must in his official capacity efface himself and utter none but the words which his adviser put in his mouth. He might think them great nonsense or he might regard them as insincere, but his duty as Governor-General was to say them with the best grace he could command.

Was it then for the present Governor-General, in opposition to the advice of his ministers, to decide what was or what was not the necessary public business. Had he the right to judge whether the action of his ministers might or might not embarrass the succeeding Government. If he admitted that Sir Charles Tupper and his colleagues were a Government and qualified to transact the business of a Government, where did he get the right to say what acts, within the authority of a Government, they might perform and what acts they might not? We do not think that anyone's common sense can answer that question.

But, it is urged that the Tupper Government was formed under peculiar circumstances; it was in a great measure "provisional." Does the Constitution know anything about "provisional" governments? Have any rules been made for the guidance of such governments? It seems to us that Sir Charles Tupper and his associates were either a Government or they were not a Government. If they were a Government they had a right to exercise all the functions of a Government, and if they were not a Government they could not constitutionally do the "ordinary business" of a Government or indeed perform any single Governmental act.

Then it is said that when the Tupper Government was formed there was no Parliament. Parliament had died of old age before Sir Charles Tupper became Premier. Is there a sort of interregnum between the dissolution of one Parliament and the election of another, and is the Governor-General empowered to act as a kind of Dictator during the interval? If this doctrine is sound it will be new to most people, both in Great Britain and in Canada. If Sir Charles Tupper's Government was a Government at all it must have been as much a Tupper's Government as Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Government was, and consequently invested with all the powers and privileges of a Government. The people under the British constitution never lay down the reins of power or place them in the hands of one man or one woman. They are too jealous of their rights and powers and privileges to do anything of that kind.

It may suit the Globe to make light of precedents in a question of this nature, but it can be decided in no other way than by precedent.

THE SHORT SESSION?

The people were told by the Government organs before Parliament met that the session would be short. Ten days was the minimum limit and thirty days the maximum. But now that the Grit members are comfortably seated in their chairs they show no disposition to leave them. They seemed to hope that the Opposition would follow the bad example which the Grits set them last winter, and resort to the policy of obstruction, but the Conservatives have done nothing of the kind. They have not made the slightest attempt to waste the time of the House. The speeches have not been inordinately long and there have not been too many of them. The Grits have done their full share of the speaking. The Estimates are not being rushed through the House and the Government seem inclined to take their own time in which to do their business. It is quite evident that the Liberal members intend to get their full sessional allowance. They have no idea of being put on short commons. We have heard how Sir Oliver Mowat's hint to make the session short was received by the Grit caucus. The demonstration then made was no doubt honest and sincere.

JUDICIOUS HELP.

There has been great distress in the country inhabited by the Armenians. The people, besides being treated with the greatest cruelty and murdered by the thousands, were heartlessly robbed. Whole districts were plundered in such a way that the inhabitants had nothing left. Not only were they stripped of every article of value, but the food to sustain life, the seed required for this year's crop, and the animals necessary to cultivate the land were carried off. The unhappy people were left utterly destitute. Money was collected for their relief in Great Britain and the United States. The whole fund amounted to about \$700,000. This sum was expended chiefly for food and clothing and implements of labor, and it did a very great deal of good. Many lives were preserved and the people seeing that they were not utterly abandoned began to hope for better times.

POLITICAL PREDICTIONS.

A great many people distrust political predictions. The politician says, if you do so and so, this and that will be the result. The hearer naturally asks, how do you know that what you foretell will happen? Some one else says that if we do what you warn us against something else will happen the very opposite of what you predict. How are we to tell which of you is right? You are neither of you a prophet, and how are we to tell whose reasoning is sound?

In the discussion of the silver question the disputants necessarily say a great deal about the future. The advocates of unrestricted coinage say that if you allow silver to be coined without restriction and make the dollar a legal tender in the ratio of sixteen to one by weight, you will have plenty of money, and the price of silver will soon go up to \$1.29 an ounce, which makes it as good as gold. There will then be no bother about keeping up the national credit. The Government will be able to meet its liabilities in good money and there will not be a panic every now and then because the gold reserve has fallen below low water mark. Wages will be high and everyone who has anything to sell will get a good price for it.

Here is a string of fine promises, but what guarantee has anyone in the United States of anywhere else that one single one of them will be performed? The gold standard advocates predict that if the Government permits silver to be coined without reserve, and makes it a legal tender, the dollar will be worth fifty cents or less. Business will be thrown into confusion, creditors will be cheated, and thousands who are now in comfortable circumstances will be utterly ruined. Then prices of all commodities will go up, but wages will not be raised in anything like a corresponding degree. The public credit will be destroyed, and the nation will be dishonored. Gold will disappear from circulation, and the only money that there will be in the country will be silver, which will only be taken at its intrinsic value.

Here is another lot of predictions. How is any one going to prove any of them to be true. If a country could be found which has made silver a legal tender in the ratio of sixteen to one, the enquirer might arrive at a reasonable conclusion as to the way in which a law making silver the standard at that ratio or somewhere near it would work. Mexico is in that position, and a Mexican, a man in authority, has told the world how an unrestricted coinage law works. Senator Limontour is the Mexican Minister of Finance. Here is what the Mexican financier said to a reporter of the New York Sun:

"Mexico has always had free coinage. The ratio is 16 to 1. Theoretically, our standard is bimetallic, but, of course, it is really a single silver standard. It is not possible to have a double standard under free coinage. Any gold we have is immediately exported, and I have never seen any gold in circulation in Mexico. Gold is at a premium of nearly 200. We produce but little gold. Last year the output was 2,000,000 ounces, while we produced the same amount of silver as the United States, 55,000,000 or 60,000,000 ounces."

There is a keen interest in Mexico in the result of your election, because of silver generally. Each time silver goes down it is a serious detriment to our country, because we have made four foreign loans, payable in gold. As silver depreciates and the premium on gold is increased, it becomes more difficult for our Government to meet these gold obligations. Of course, we have silver bonds also, which are taken up at home. The gold bonds are worth nearly double what the silver bonds are worth. It was a serious blow to us when the Indian mints were closed in 1872, because of the fall in the price of silver which followed."

With regard to wages, in answer to the question, "What is the effect upon wages of the depreciating of the silver standard?" Mr. Limontour said: "They have not increased perceptibly. The same is true of Japan, where wages are very low. For this reason, Japan and Mexico will, in a few years, be able to compete successfully with England and the United States because of the silver standard and low wages."

"What is the ruling rate of wages for agricultural laborers in Mexico?" "Twenty-five cents a day."

A single example of this kind is more convincing than volumes of predictions.

A MEAN INUENDO.

The St. John Sun, very justly condemns the mean and cowardly attack which the very fresh member from Nanaimo made upon the Chief Justice of this Province. It says: "The boy orator of British Columbia indulged yesterday in the reprehensible practice of insinuating a charge against an official under cover of asking a question. If Mr. McInnes can prove that Chief Justice Davis canvassed during the recent election he should say so and tender the evidence. The query method of insinuation is grossly unfair."

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But the Turk is as cruel as ever. He shows no disposition to reform. As soon as the Armenians begin to exhibit signs of reviving prosperity they will be robbed again. What is the good of helping the Armenians, they say, if they are to be left in a country where they are exposed to the most barbarous cruelty? The best way to help them is to give them the means to get out of the Sultan's dominions. Those who reason in this way propose to raise a million of dollars to assist the Armenians in leaving the country. There are, it is said, about a million and a half of them in the disturbed districts, and a million of dollars will go a long way towards helping them to emigrate to a country in which they might at least be allowed to live in peace. The scheme appears to be both reasonable and humane, but there are friends of the Armenians who say it is, for various reasons, impracticable. Although the Turkish Government treats the Armenians so badly it does not want them to leave the country. It would, therefore, throw every conceivable obstacle in the way of carrying out the scheme. It would be found that the good people who favor the emigration project, instead of helping the Armenians, would do much to make their condition harder than it is at present. The better plan is to do what is possible to relieve the unfortunate people in their own country, to which they are deeply attached, and at the same time to do all that it is possible to do to bring influence to bear on the Turkish Government to treat the Armenians better than they have been treated for many years.

ILLIBERAL LIBERALS.

It is, after all, not surprising to see ardent and loud-voiced Liberals protesting the most illiberal views with regard to the latitude that should be allowed civil servants in their political action and in the expression of their political views, for it has been observed that every fiery Radical, whenever power is placed in his hands, turns out to be the most intolerant of tyrants. The Hon. L. H. Davies the other day said from his place in Parliament: "So far as I am concerned, when I meet a man on the platform who is a Government employe, and he abuses me and my leader and my party, and I subsequently have the power, that man shall cease to be a public officer." We will not say what we think of that very singular utterance of a man who is continually making loud professions of his liberalism. We leave it to the Montreal Witness, a Liberal newspaper, to administer to him the rebuke he so richly deserves.

"We have no hesitation," comments the Witness, "in saying that this remark of Mr. Davies is a piece of the most dangerous political immorality. Mr. Davies here takes an attitude from which there is no logical stopping place till we reach Andrew Jackson's dictum, 'To the victors belong the spoils,' which reduces popular government to mere brigandage. Either civil servants have political rights and duties or they are politically dead. If they are politically dead, it would be the simple duty of Government to depose them from their places the moment they committed any political act. In fact, it would need no action on the part of the Government as anyone could simply resign. If, on the other hand, they have political rights, they are bound to use them and that actively. Mr. Davies draws a distinction between the passive casting of a vote and offensive partisanship. This distinction is at least a comprehensible one and might be a valid one if offensive partisanship could be legally defined. The danger about it is that it is the Government of the day which is the judge as to whether the partisanship has been too active or not. That practically means that no partisanship on behalf of the Government of the day could be too active. The danger, if any, would be when it was not active enough. On the other hand, any partisanship whatever against the party which wins the victory would be too great to be pardoned. Mr. Davies indeed makes 'no bones' about the matter. He plainly tells us that the partisanship he means to punish is a partisanship against himself and his party."

The views on this subject of the freedom of civil servants expressed by the Hon. Mr. Foster, generally considered a rather straight-laced Conservative, are in striking contrast to the illiberal opinions expressed by the Liberal Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Mr. Foster, in the debate that took place on the 2nd inst., said:

"It is not because men should be disfranchised simply because they held positions in the Civil Service, and he always people of an intelligent class, many of them receiving as salary the small sum of ten dollars or so, whom it was unfair and unreasonable to hold for that reason as unfit to take part in the Government of the country. He believed that a man had a right not only to his vote, but to the honest, becoming and respectful expression of his opinion by voice and pen, and that the only limit to be placed thereon was that which his duties should not be interfered with, and that an official should not lose sight of the respect which is due to the government employing him, and which was due to his employer. He did not, above all, desire to see the spoils system introduced in this country. He did not want to see officials arbitrarily dismissed by the whim of a minister, but thought that every person accused should have an opportunity of seeing and answering the charges against him. He hoped Mr. Laurier would express his views upon the subject."

The only excuse that can be made for the narrow and intolerant views expressed by some Liberal Ministers and approved by the majority of the members supporting them, is that they are soounded on by the hungry horde of office seekers and their relatives and friends that they dare not express themselves in terms of fairness and moderation lest they should be utterly discredited in their several constituencies.

Presbyterian Missionaries. WINNIPEG, Sept. 8. — The superintendent of Presbyterian missions has made appointments to British Columbia presbyteries as follows: Calgary—Jas. Nairn; Kamloops, R. M. Dickey; Westminster—A. E. Camp; Victoria—G. Perry; Edmonton—W. L. Atkinson. The Kolapore cup has been handed over by Speaker Edgar for safe keeping until it is returned to England next year.

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