

circumstances it seems far from improbable that the votes will be cast rather on Dominion than on Provincial issues. The principal question at the last general election for the Dominion was "Protection against Free Trade," and this, certainly, has no bearing on the Quebec issues. It has been surmised that some of the late demonstrations, and especially that in honor of Mr. Caron at Lorette, were intended to influence the local elections. If not specially intended for that object, it was, at all events, made available to promote it. The County of Quebec returned a liberal at the last Provincial elections, and the Quebec Premier, who, with his colleagues was at the picnic, made special reference to the local member, and, as might naturally be expected, said little in his favor. The indications are that the present Quebec Government will obtain a considerable majority in the event of the election taking place within a few weeks. Their weakest point appears to be the peculiar position of one of the members of the Ministry, who was, during the last session, subjected to a charge, which the House deemed it proper to refer to a Committee of Enquiry, which was still sitting, when the prorogation took place, rather suddenly, but after a distinct promise, as is currently rumored, that it would meet again. We are inclined to think that it would be difficult to find a precedent under Parliamentary Government for the prorogation of a Legislature pending an investigation into a serious charge against one of the Ministers. Whatever may have been the understanding arrived at, it seems to be improbable under present circumstances that the Legislature will again be called together, and the country should be prepared for the impending dissolution.

It is but recently that rumors were in circulation, apparently well founded, that there had been negotiations between the leader of the Government and some prominent members of the Opposition with a view to a coalition, and this coalition, unlike the last, was to be based on a mutual agreement to settle at least one question, on which we have little doubt public opinion is nearly unanimous. We refer of course, to the abolition of the Legislative Council, which, after the experience of the sister Province of Ontario, is generally considered too expensive a piece of machinery to be any longer maintained. It is a significant fact that, if current rumor can be believed, the negotiations were broken off not on any question of public policy but solely on personal grounds. It seems tolerably certain that some important members of the Opposi-

tion were opposed to the coalition, and this alone would have ensured the failure of the negotiations.

An extraordinary article appeared in a recent number of our evening contemporary, the *Star*, the purport of which was that there was a serious misunderstanding between those hitherto faithful allies, the Dominion and Quebec Governments "in reference more particularly to the railway interests of the Province," and some alleged utterances of the Hon. Mr. Chapleau are said to be corroborative of this impression. Mr. Chapleau's utterance was to the effect that the Dominion Government should come to the aid of that of Quebec and endeavor to induce the Canadian Pacific Company to buy the Occidental at the price demanded. It is to be presumed, if there is any truth in the rumors afloat, that the Dominion Government has declined to interfere in such a matter. Mr. Chapleau is said to be pressed by Liberals, as well as Conservatives, to form a new party "with a view to counterbalance the influence of Ontario at Ottawa." It will be news to the people of Ontario to learn that their Province "has an all preponderating influence with the Federal Government." The impression which prevails in that Province is that Quebec has had just such an influence as that attributed to Ontario, and most assuredly if the Dominion Government was to interfere in the sale of a railway, constructed by Quebec, and in which the Dominion has no pecuniary interest, it would lay itself fairly open to such an imputation.

We do not profess to know anything regarding the negotiations between the Quebec Government and the Pacific Company, for the sale of the railroad to the latter, but we can draw no other inference from the proceedings of the Company than that the price demanded was so high as to lead them to determine to obtain the desired connection between their main line, including the Toronto branch, and the city of Montreal in a different way. Why Ontario should be dragged into the controversy it is difficult to comprehend, as the Maritime Provinces are equally interested in objecting to Dominion interference with a strictly local question. It is not unworthy of notice that one of the chief promoters of this new party is Mr. Joseph Perrault, who is an avowed Annexationist, and rather a strange ally of the Conservatives of Quebec. He is the authority for the statement that the Quebec Liberals are prepared "to form a united Quebec First party, and to protect our interests."

In view of the statements which have

been publicly made, it seems desirable that if any Liberal party exists in the Province of Quebec, holding constitutional views, its leaders should come forward with a declaration of the principles on which they claim public confidence and support. If the Quebec Liberals really intend to enlist under the standard of Mr. Joseph Perrault, and to attempt to bully and levy black mail from the Dominion, they will find that there will be another "First party" formed very soon, which will embrace all the other Provinces with the exception of Quebec. When Mr. Perrault explains what he means by "not getting fair play at Ottawa" it will probably be more easy to discuss the subject which he has forced on public attention.

FAIR TRADE.

We have on previous occasions vindicated so clearly what we consider the true policy for Canada to adopt, with regard to the "fair trade" agitation in England, that we should not have deemed it necessary to revert to the subject had we not learned, on authority on which we can rely, that an attempt is about to be made to commit her still further to a policy, that, in our judgment, would be most disastrous. We mentioned in our last number that the "fair trade movement originated with Canadian delegates from our Dominion Board of Trade, and that the principal plank in the platform is Commercial Union between Great Britain and her Colonies on the basis of each giving to the other "reciprocal advantages." We feel assured that we are doing no injustice to Mr. Dobell, an extensive lumber merchant in Quebec, when we designate him as one of the most prominent supporters of this new policy, and when we state, further, that he is at the present time endeavoring to have his hands strengthened by Canadian Boards of Trade in carrying on the agitation for the "Commercial Union," of which he is one of the most prominent advocates. Mr. Dobell, as is well known, is nearly connected with a member of the present Government, and, moreover, Sir Alexander Galt, the Canadian High Commissioner, has given expression to opinions that, if not in complete accordance with those of Mr. Dobell, are, in our judgment, equally objectionable.

The time has arrived when the Dominion Government should decide as to the policy which it is prepared to adopt. Of course if its decision should be in favor of reciprocal tariff arrangements with Great Britain, under which British