

representatives make it pretty clear that no case can be at present made out in favour of any costly attempts at irrigation. The matter of protection from prairie fires is one of the very first importance, and railways should certainly be placed under the strictest compulsion to use all necessary precautions. It is well that the Government has undertaken to legislate in the direction proposed by Mr. Davin. The question of setting apart lands for a university may no doubt be most wisely left for the consideration of the provinces into which the Territory will one day be sub-divided, and to which this and other educational matters will constitutionally belong. There is not much to be said in favour of and a good deal against the policy of granting second homesteads, in itself considered, but there is certainly great force in the contention that faith should be kept with those settlers who went into the Territory when the offer of second homesteads was one of the inducements held out by the Act. So far as we are able to see, the logic of justice is on the side of Mr. Davin's proposal that the privilege should be extended so as to include all settlers to whom second homesteads were virtually promised when they went into the Territory. With regard to the unsettled Half-breed claims it seems impossible to know whether there is really any serious justification for the cry of rising discontent and danger, or not. Surely the facts could be ascertained, and if so, surely it is the duty of Government and Parliament to ascertain the facts and govern themselves accordingly. But whatever may or may not be desirable in respect to the other questions brought up by Mr. Davin, the refusal of the Government to institute an impartial inquiry into the management of the Mounted Police, and particularly into the charges against the Commissioner, is indefensible. In view of the definiteness of those complaints, and the fact that the Press of the North-West is practically unanimous in reiterating them, it is vain for the Minister of the Interior to rise in his place and say he does not believe them. The question is not one of Mr. Dewdney's personal belief, but of fact, capable of proof or disproof. The powers of the Police and of its Chief in the North-West are exceptionally large. The people are in a large degree at the mercy of the force, and the members of the force, in their turn, at that of the Commissioner. Justice to all—to the people, the force, and the Commissioner—demands that such charges should not be suffered to go unnoticed. The very refusal of the Government to permit an inquiry, which would have been no less useful in clearing the innocent than in convicting the guilty, will be construed by many in a sense very unfavourable to the accused and to the Government.

"MANKIND," says Arthur Helps, "is always in extremes." No one whose duty or pleasure calls him to read the debates which are now going on in the Canadian Commons, on tariff questions, will need to go any farther for illustration of the truth of this observation. If it were not aside from the point we might well stop at the outset to moralize over the spectacle which is now presented, of two kindred and so-called Christian peoples, united by many of the strongest racial and social bonds, located side by side and sharing between them the empire of almost a continent, yet both legislating in utterly selfish disregard of each other's welfare, if not, as there is just now some reason to fear, in positive hostility to each other's interests, instead of mutually striving to act in a neighbourly spirit. Such conduct is especially reprehensible when the rulers of each must know in their hearts that such friendly action would in the end, and in the case of both, redound to the advantage of the people for whom they respectively legislate. We on this continent are accustomed to moralize, as it is easy to do, on the folly and wickedness of the rulers of Europe, whose bitter jealousies and rivalries are perennially crushing their respective peoples under such enormous military burdens. But there is great danger, should not present tendencies be speedily checked, that the United States and Canada may very shortly exhibit a state of things, in their commercial relations to each other, equally foolish, unchristian and hateful. It may be doubted if a commercial war is not in many respects almost more ignoble than a military war. But this is aside from the observation we set out to make. It is hard to determine which party goes to the wildest extremes in these tariff debates, the one which now holds that free trade with the sixty millions of people to the South would be disastrous to Canada, or the other which maintains that such trade would be a panacea for all our agricultural and commercial ills. The one party enters upon a hopeless struggle against all economic laws when it

argues that it is wise for Canada to attempt to ignore the position in which nature has placed her in relation to her great neighbour. The other shuts its eyes to the teaching of the plainest facts, when it argues that any degree of unrestricted intercourse with the United States could free the farmers from a depression which is felt no less severely by those on the other side of the boundary, who have already free access to the coveted market. So, again, what can be more purblind than the argument which holds that free intercourse would expose Canadian manufactures to utter extinction by the competition from beyond the border, while it never takes into account the fact that by the same token Canadian manufacturers would have the market for their products indefinitely enlarged by access to unlimited numbers of excellent customers from whom they are now shut out by the tariff wall. No less notable in its extreme one-sidedness is the declamation which paints in glowing colours the blessings that would result from free trade with our American neighbours, while carefully forgetting that the only possible present condition of obtaining that free trade is that of adopting against the rest of the world, and above all against Great Britain, the tariff of one of the most highly protected nations under the sun. Can it be doubted that the path of reason and truth lies in this case, as in so many others, midway between the two extremes, or that, while the Government and its supporters are most unwise in allowing themselves to be driven by party pressure from the more defensible position they took ten years ago and have since maintained, those Liberals are no less illogical who would sacrifice not only national dignity, but some of the prerogatives of national self-government, upon the altar of Commercial Union?

THE familiar maxim *summum jus, summa injuria*, will seem to most readers, we think, to be applicable in a modified sense to the case of General Laurie, M.P., as explained by himself to the House. No one can doubt, we suppose, that he was justified by the letter of the law in accepting, and the accountant in paying, mileage dues from the place of his present residence in England; but few persons will believe that the law was ever intended to apply in the case of residence beyond the limits of Canadian territory. Though the amount of loss to the revenue is not large enough to be startling, there is no law of courtesy, so far as we are aware, which requires us to forget that it must be considerably in excess of the necessary travelling expenses of even the trans-Atlantic trip. But the aspect in which the matter becomes of sufficient importance to invite comment is that which presents the point of honour involved. In a case in which the validity of a pecuniary claim rests on a mere technicality, and not on the spirit and intention of the Act, one could wish that every Canadian Commoner, to say nothing of any peculiar sense of obligation which some might suppose to attach to the position of a military officer, would unhesitatingly give conscience the benefit of the doubt, and set an example worthy of imitation by private citizens of every grade all over the land. We think it unfortunate, to say the least, that the matter did not present itself in this light to General Laurie.

IT may be, perhaps, a little late to notice a matter which was set at rest some weeks ago, yet the result of the contest between the Colony of Victoria and Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, upon the subject of the new Divorce Law of Victoria, is too significant to be permitted to pass without comment. The *Spectator* of March 1st contained an article in which all that was involved in Lord Knutsford's surrender was very fully and frankly stated. The *Spectator* does not blame the Secretary for finally yielding the point, since it sees clearly that he really had no alternative. He questioned all the principal colonists available, consulted all the Agents-General from Australia, and the reply from all was the same—"the Divorce Act must this time be accepted, or the beginning of the end will have arrived." The Colonies are "determined that upon this kind of subject they will not submit to the authority of the Mother-country." The question they regard as one of their internal social civilization, of importance only to themselves and not to the whole Empire. It involves their right of internal self-government. "They insist, therefore, on going their own way, practically under menace of secession." There can be no doubt that the *Spectator* is right in thus interpreting the views of the colonists. Nor is it easy to dispute its conclusion that this result "reduces British sovereignty in Australia"—and by implication in Canada—"to something less than a

form, and considerably worse. The colonists take up the position, not of subjects of the Crown, with a right of veto resting in the Imperial Parliament, but of allies who, unlike most allies, leave ultimate responsibility on the shoulders of their ally." The *Spectator* does not see, nor do we, upon what plea, save her own will, Great Britain could now veto a re-establishment of slavery in a colony. It thinks that the wisest next step towards the friendly alliance in which the relations of the Mother-country and the Great Republic of the Pacific must ultimately end, should be for the former to abandon, by formal act, the right of veto, except in regard to laws deemed inconsistent with treaties, or perilous to the safety of the Empire. Australia would then remain in the Empire very much in the same position which Bavaria takes up towards Germany, but without the obligation of contributing her share towards the cost and risk of military defence, and also without conceding complete internal Free-trade. The relation would be undeniably one-sided, but it would at least entail no public humiliation, nor injury to the general conscience, both of which are held to be involved in the present system. But even under the new relation proposed it is clear that events would be liable any day to occur which would prompt the Colonial allies to ask why they should be held bound by the provisions of treaties which they had no hand in making, and to which they never consented. It is not to be wondered at if the Mother-country feels dissatisfied with the present colonial relations, any more than it is to be wondered at that the grown-up colonies insist on full self-government in internal affairs. As the *Spectator* philosophically observes, it is not easy to see that there is any remedy, "any more than there is in a household, where a son, being of full age and with a fortune of his own, insists on doing a wrong or an injudicious thing."

WITH the reassembling of the British Parliament this week the constructive work of the Session will begin in earnest. Apart from the Budget the three great measures for discussion are those relating to the Tithes, Land Purchase, and Free Education. Though the first-named has already passed its second reading, it is likely that it will yet have to run the gauntlet of a host of amendments and adverse criticisms. The Opposition thus far has been left largely in the hands of the Welsh members, but it is scarcely to be expected that the Bill will be allowed to pass without attack by the more prominent opponents of the Government. It is pretty apparent, however, that hostile criticism is much weakened by the fact that Mr. Gladstone and some other prominent Liberals are too sincerely attached to the Established Church to become very ardent opponents of the Bill on the ground on which it can be most effectively assailed, namely, that of the inherent injustice of the State-church Establishment. Lord Salisbury evidently fears that the progress of this and the Irish Land Bill may be seriously hindered by toes within his own political household. His main object in calling together his Conservative supporters before the recess was to impress upon them the necessity for avoiding frequent amendments and lengthy discussions on points of detail. A fact worthy of notice which crops out in his speech on this occasion is that the Government measures are designed not more to remedy present grievances or to meet present demands than to anticipate and as far as possible forestall more radical legislation by the Liberals should they return to power after the election. Thus the Tithes Act aims to remove the more glaring abuses of the system as at present administered, and to settle the tithe on such a basis as may put it, if possible, out of reach of the ruthless hands of those who would have it converted to non-ecclesiastical and national uses. In like manner a main purpose of the Educational legislation proposed, which may not however be reached this session, is to save the voluntary schools from the destruction which, it is thought, would overtake them, should a system of free public schools be established on an undenominational basis. The Land Purchase Act was advocated by Lord Salisbury as a necessary preliminary to the extension of the Local Government system to Ireland, and both these measures have it as their ultimate end to drain, to some extent, the sources which feed the Home Rule movement. Those sources are no doubt to be found largely in the discontent arising from landlord oppression and landless poverty, though it is probably that national or racial sentiment may be found a stronger auxiliary than Conservatives and Unionists are accustomed to suppose. In any case it will aid materially in understanding the motives and spirit of the coming struggle, to remember that the