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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE election of Mr. Maclean for East York adds another to the long list of Conservative gains in the bye-elections, and adds two more votes, on a division, to a Government majority which was already, perhaps, too large to secure the best results, according to the theory of party government, which accords to the constitutional Opposition, functions, almost or quite as essential to good administration as those of the executive and its supporters—functions which can be effectively discharged only when the strength of the check vote is in fairly close proportion to that of the ruling vote. In this instance the result of the election was not, we suppose, a surprise to anyone, as it seems to have been pretty well understood that the victory had been won in advance, when the voters' lists were completed. If this simply means that the followers of the Government party and policy are more numerous in the East York electorate than the followers of the Opposition leaders and their party, no exception could reasonably be taken, unless on the ground that the franchise is too narrow or too broad. If, and so far, as it means that the local agents of the one party were more active, or more unscrupulous than those of the other party, it simply discloses, or rather emphasizes, the defects of a franchise act which, among other improprieties, makes the right of the qualified elector to his vote dependent upon the vigilance of interested partisans. We say this, not because we have reason to believe that any injustice was wrought in this instance, for we think it highly probable that the result correctly represents the will of the majority, but because we like not the law which affords room for such suspicions and allegations.

IN the case of East York, it is very likely that other causes besides mere party strength operated to increase the majority for the Government candidate, prominent among them the fact that he was the stronger candidate, intellectually and politically. Had the Opposition succeeded in finding a candidate who could have impressed

himself upon the public as in some large degree worthy to succeed Alexander Mackenzie, their chances of success would certainly have been much greater. But in this case the Liberal machine seems to have made a mistake similar to that which lost the local election for their opponents a week or two before; the mistake, namely, of choosing a candidate on other than public grounds. We say this, not as reflecting by any means upon Mr. Leslie's character and standing, but simply from the point of view of fitness to succeed a great leader in Parliament. Of the successful candidate it is unnecessary that we say much. As a brother journalist he is entitled to the good will of members of the profession, and ours he certainly has, though we cannot profess to have much faith in the virtues of the policy of restriction of which he is so ardent an advocate. But as a young man of more than average ability, who is just entering public life, he has before him an opportunity to deserve well of his country, which we hope he may use to the utmost. As a graduate of the University of Toronto, he has had educational advantages superior to those of the larger number of the representatives of the people at Ottawa. His practical training in the profession of journalism affords, probably, a training second to no other for success in public life. It is, moreover, a training which should make its possessor broadminded and, above most others, superior to the pettinesses and prejudices of partisanship, for no one is in a better position than the journalist to understand both the uses and the abuses, both the good and the evil, of partyism, and to choose the one and eschew the other. It is possible that Mr. Maclean's critics may say that the newspaper which he controls has not been always so conducted as to afford the best grounds for hoping for any very sudden or marked development of impartiality on his part, and we are not sure that we can deny that its partisanship has not been uniformly marked by breadth and magnanimity. But new occasions bring new duties and new responsibilities, and a proper sense of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the Canadian Commons, at the present crisis in the country's history, should suffice to increase the mental stature of every well-informed and conscientious representative. We shall watch the course of our journalistic neighbour, in his high position, with much interest, and we trust that his career in Parliament may be such as not only to reflect honour upon his profession, but to make him a benefactor to the Dominion.

UGHT not every qualified Canadian elector to vote, unless for some special reason excused? If so, does *ought* in this case denote merely a moral obligation, such as lies within the province in which every man is answerable to his own conscience only, or does it denote also a political obligation, such as is binding upon every good citizen by virtue of his citizenship? If the latter, if the duty to vote is a duty owed to the State, ought not the State to require its performance by every citizen not specially excused for some good and sufficient reason? Has not the State at least as good a right to require every elector to vote, as to require every citizen to educate his children? Is not the well-being of the State as deeply involved in the former as in the latter? It is shown by unquestionable statistics that at the last general election in Canada about one-third of the legally-qualified electors neglected to cast their ballots. Does any observant person doubt that the prophecy of Lieber, quoted in Dr. Wicksteed's letter, which appeared in our columns last week, that "they whose voting is the least desirable are the surest to be at the poll," held good on the occasion referred to, and holds good of every election held in Canada? If so, does it not follow, irresistibly, that the Dominion has suffered and is suffering great loss and damage from the neglect of one-third of its enfranchised citizens to perform this plain political duty? If so, can any good and sufficient reason be given why the unpatriotic or careless third should not be punished for wilful neglect of a patriotic obligation, whose neglect has resulted in injury to the country, politically and morally? Such are some of the questions which are raised by the motion which is now in the hands of a select committee and must shortly come before Parliament.

WE hope that not only every member of the Select Committee, but every member of the House of Commons of Canada, has carefully and thoughtfully read Dr. Wicksteed's paper. The subject is certainly one of the most important that has come, or is likely to come, before this Parliament. It cannot be denied that our political reputation is at a low ebb, and deservedly so. From the ethical-political point of view, the situation is serious. Something must be done to elevate the tone of the House of Commons, if Canada is to maintain a respectable position in the society of Christian nations. But the stream cannot rise above its source. The people's representatives are the representatives of the people. They are not, however, the representatives of the whole people. They are not even the representatives of the whole body of electors. If they were, and still manifested the servile allegiance to party which characterizes the present followers of their respective leaders, we should have little reason to hope that the future will not be as the past. There are, of course, a good many difficulties in the way of the enactment and enforcement of a compulsory Act. But they cannot be insuperable. Even if the measure is novel and even somewhat heroic, if it be the only way, or the most feasible way in which to effect a great and much-needed political reform, is it not justified on the principle that "desperate diseases require desperate remedies?" All are pretty well agreed that a great reform is needed, though the adherents of each party, in Parliament and out, naturally enough think that it is chiefly needed in the ranks of their political opponents. Why, then, should not both parties in the Commons and Senate unite in applying the remedy, leaving the result to justify their respective diagnoses, in respect to the seat of the disease? Can anyone suggest any other treatment which is on the whole less objectionable, less radical, and yet half so likely to bring about a great and salutary change?

BETWEEN optimism and pessimism, as mental modest give us optimism everywhere and always. Every man who has faith that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill"—and we pity the man who has no such faith—must, in the nature of things, be an optimist. Nor do we disapprove of the phase of optimism which enables one to believe that this and that and the other course of events is going somehow to bring about just the particular good on which he has set his heart, although the drift, so far as apparent at the moment, may be in quite another direction. Touching the well-worn, but to true Canadians, ever-fresh theme of the future of Canada, two optimists, one of French, the other of British origin, have lately written in glowing and eloquent terms. Mr. L. G. Desjardins, M.P. for L'Islet, has published a brochure in which he deals lusty blows against annexation. Mr. Barlow Cumberland has a letter in a late number of the *English Canadian*, in which he most ardently and eloquently lays down and defends the proposition, "The Future of Canada is Canadian." Both appeal powerfully to Canadian sentiment. Both, while maintaining that our material interests will in the end be best promoted by our remaining Canadian, hasten to take higher ground. They maintain nobly that intellectual and moral interests are vastly more precious than any which are merely material, and that these will be incomparably better promoted in a Canadian than in an American Canada. This is what nine-tenths of the people of the Dominion honestly believe, though a loyal citizen of the United States might find cause for perriment in the opinion. Both writers have done well to appeal thus to what is highest and best in the way of patriotic sentiment in the bosoms of their respective races. What they have not done, and what we suppose neither of them set out to do, is to look the existing state of things fairly in the face and tell us what is to be done to avert threatened evils, and work out our Canadian destiny. The gods help those who help themselves. We yield to none in the sincerity of our desire to see a Canadian nation, with its own laws, institutions and national characteristics and ambitions, firmly planted and rapidly developing on this northern half of the continent. But from the practical point of view we have to confess ourselves a good deal discouraged with present prospects.