

renewed. While exception may be taken to some portions of Mr. Crooks's Bill, we agree with Mr. McDougall, of Simcoe, that it is, on the whole, a good one, and that, at any rate, the law, as thus amended, deserves a fair trial. The evil to be coped with is one which does not admit of trifling, and, therefore, any earnest effort to deal with it effectively, so long as it stops short of injustice or undue meddlesomeness with a legalized trade from which the Province derives considerable revenue, merits tender and patient consideration.

At the close of a session, it is usual to take a retrospective view of the work accomplished by the Legislature; but, on the present occasion, the review would scarcely be edifying. There appears little cause for congratulation in any respect. The Opposition has not discharged its legitimate functions with much credit, and, although we have felt constrained to speak in strong terms of ministerial shortcomings, it has assuredly not been with any desire to aid in restoring Mr. Cameron and his friends to place. It would doubtless be well that the Left should be stronger in numbers and effective power than they now are, because the Government, relying on the numerical strength of its following, seems determined to do as it pleases, and it pleases to do as little as possible. A sharp stimulus in the shape of a strong Opposition might arouse Ministers from their lethargy, infuse vigour into their languid wills, and urge them to pay some heed to the demands of the people. At present, there is a great deal of carping criticism, doubtless, but no strong grasp of principle, no settled and determinate policy. If Mr. Cameron's following were to go to the country to-morrow, what cry could they raise at the hustings? They could hardly hope to gain the ear of the electorate by parading once more the worn-out story of discharged officers and convicts from the Central Prison. The Orange Bill might perhaps do something, but they were quite as ready, under the former régime, to defer to the prejudices of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, as Mr. Mowat is to yield to the power or blandishments of Mr. Fraser. Take again the question of exemptions, why did the Opposition members confine themselves to the introduction of it in the form of a vote of non-confidence, when

they knew well that the entire strength of the anti-exemption vote could not be brought out? Why did they not follow up their first abortive effort by the introduction of a substantive motion? Simply because their's is a house divided against itself upon that important subject and therefore they shirked it. Ministers have some show of principle and it is embodied in Mr. Fraser; but what shred or patch of policy can the Opposition call its own? It is always turning up some mare's nest or other; but what advantage would accrue to the country by substituting Mr. Cameron for Mr. Mowat? We know of none; indeed, in all probability, it would be a change for the worse.

It is now sufficiently clear that to secure radical reform in the matter of exemptions, which is, by all odds, the most pressing at this juncture, the people must rely on themselves and secure the triumph of their opinions at the polls. From neither party have they anything to hope; but it is in their power to settle the question, independently of both, by ignoring the party distinctions which separate them. Our complaint against the Government was, and is, that, with the exception of the Commissioner of Public Works, they are feeble in will and sluggish in action. They need a thorough stirring-up; they need to be reminded that the voice of the people should be respectfully heard, and heeded when it is heard. No one, unfettered by party ties, will refuse to acknowledge any signs of reinvigoration, energy, and resolution which may unexpectedly appear. But that is no reason why they should be exempt from severe criticism while they remain *fainéant* and inert. The truest friend of the Government can hardly desire that public affairs should be conducted as they have been, for the residue of the Parliamentary term; because it must be evident to him that if they are so conducted, the knell of the Mowat Cabinet would be heard without fail at the general election.

It is not pleasant to recur again to the sinister influence which rules the Cabinet and renders it utterly powerless for good. The Toronto Street Railway discussion was another evidence of its presence and potency. One of our city papers remarks that 'no stronger influence' than that of the Company 'ever comes into the lobbies of our Parliament House,' and further, that