

sion of trade with Great Britain, if that is Mr. Foster's meaning. But the Government is still sounding the praises of the National Policy, and the National Policy is unfortunately irreconcilable with the admission of British products, either free or on a revenue tariff. The Government cannot throw over the protective policy which has served it so well. Hence the meaning of Mr. Foster's words cannot be the natural one we have been considering. What then can they mean? The much-talked-of Imperial Customs union? But that would be, if it involved any reciprocity worthy of the name on the part of Canada, nearly as fatal to Canadian protected manufactures as complete free trade. Moreover, as must now be becoming pretty clear to even its most sanguine advocates, there is scarcely the slightest shadow of a prospect that Great Britain will seriously consider such a proposition. Nay, it is even questionable whether she would accept the doubtful boon of free admission to Canadian markets, if it involved discrimination against other countries even on the part of Canada, to say nothing of discrimination on her own part. Hence we must give up the attempt to solve the Government's riddle, in any such sense as to give us the gleam of hope for which we are anxiously looking.

WE fear that the Dominion Franchise Act is not "upon its trial" in any such sense as to assure objectors of its prompt repeal in case it can be proved to be unfair in its nature, and partisan in its working. Nevertheless we agree with our correspondent "S" that the more fully it is discussed at this stage of its operation the better. That no charge of favouritism has as yet been seriously made against any reviser, we admit, if "seriously" means formally and specifically. But our correspondent can scarcely deny that suspicions and insinuations are but too abundant. It may be said, it is true, that this will be the case to a greater or less extent under any circumstances. But the *gravamen* of our charge is that in this case the circumstances are such as to excite, though not to justify, such suspicions, seeing that in what is to all intents and purposes an issue between two parties, the one party takes advantage of its position to appoint the umpires and control the machinery. Were the revising barristers appointed as they are, we believe, in England, on a strictly non-partisan system, one of the chief objections to the Franchise Act would be taken away at a stroke. We might for the sake of argument admit that every revising officer hitherto appointed has performed his duty with the most rigid impartiality, and yet we should feel constrained none the less to protest against the Act, seeing that the party in opposition can have no guarantee that the very next appointment may not be made the means of perpetrating a gross injustice. "S" observes, "Your conclusion that judges appointed by the Dominion Government would be likely to favour its cause in court, would cause all our judges to be distrusted." We do not think we reached that conclusion: we certainly did not mean to put it that way. At the same time it is just as well to recognize the fact that judges are still but men, though in a majority of cases they succeed far above the average of men in divesting themselves of old prepossessions. Does "S" believe that the first Quebec Commission would have split on the same lines, all other conditions being the same, had Mr. Mercier belonged to the other political party, or that Judge Elliot would have reached the same conclusion, contrary to the opinions of the higher courts, if the effect would have been to give the seat to the other candidate? These questions may seem ungracious, but they cast no imputation upon the perfect *conscientiousness* of the judges in question. Why should a Government which aims at scrupulous fairness—we are not saying that the present one does not—secure for itself the power to take an unfair advantage of its opponents? The same question may be asked with equal force in reference to the provision which requires that the voters' lists be printed by the Government's own servants, in its own printing office. Though this is not, strictly speaking, a provision of the Franchise Act, it is to all intents and purposes a part of the electoral machinery. Does "S" doubt that nine-tenths of all the Liberals in the Dominion really believe that between the Government revisers and other officials and the Government printing bureau, they are made the victims of foul play in the elections? Grant that they are wrong in this belief, is not the fact that the system creates and fosters such suspicions—and no one who knows anything of Canadian party politics can doubt that suspicion would be equally rife among Conservatives were the Liberals in

power and using the same Act—its own sufficient condemnation? Surely it is time we should strive, if we are indissolubly wedded to the party system, to ameliorate its bitterness by the introduction of a little of the spirit of British fair play and even, were not such a thing too much to hope for, a spice of chivalry towards opponents into its working.

EVEN at the risk of seeming to give undue space to this subject we must add a word in reference to the making up of the voters' lists. Let us glance for a moment at the law itself. Section 19 (2) of the Act provides, *inter alia*, that any person desiring to add to the lists after the preliminary revision has the right to apply for the said addition if he has, at least two weeks before the day fixed for final revision, deposited with or mailed to the revising officer a notice in due form, etc., etc. It further enacts that the revising officer, after hearing any evidence that may be adduced, may amend the list "as to him seems right and proper." "S" says, "I believe that every facility should be allowed men to enter their names upon the preliminary lists without expense, but backed by a solemn declaration of their belief that they have a right to vote under the existing law." The italics are ours and we say, "Agreed, with that proviso." But is not that a very different thing from the provision which we have in part quoted? Is it any wonder that with so good an opportunity the lists should be "stuffed," as was the case in London, with hundreds of names of those who were without the shadow of a right to vote, the revising officer himself being judge? And when we think of all the expense, time, and trouble involved in examining into every one of these cases and proving that the party has no right to the franchise, can there be any room for doubt that the party having the most money and the least scrupulousness will be pretty sure to gain the advantage in the end? To our thinking the fact of the enormous expenses involved in the administration of the Act, from beginning to end of the election, is of itself its sufficient condemnation. And of course, under our vicious party system, the party whose friends are in power and have the disposal of the abounding patronage of all descriptions will always have the most money to spend for electoral purposes. We cannot stay to deal with other features of the Act, but in view of those we have noticed: the fact that all the machinery for the working of it is in the hands of officials, many of them partisans of the most pronounced type and all of them personally interested in the success of the Government candidates; that the Government appoints the officers who revise and finally determine the voters' lists and the judges whose decisions are final in appealed cases; that immense expense, much time and eternal vigilance are necessary in order to secure anything like correct final revisions, and that these revised lists are printed in a printing establishment which is directly under the control of the Government of the day and its employees, is it too much to say that it is not a law calculated to secure the implicit confidence of the Opposition or the public? Might we not even say that it is such a law as may be used by an unscrupulous Government—such as might some day get into power—not only to inflict gross injustice upon the Opposition, but to stifle the voice of the electorate and imperil the liberties of the people? Is it too much to add that by means of it a thoroughly unscrupulous administration might keep itself in power for a generation, unless ousted by revolutionary means?

THE manner in which the dispute between the authorities and employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway was brought to an end the other day reflects great credit upon both parties, as well as upon the body of engineers whose good offices so opportunely proffered opened the way for a pacific settlement. That the reference of the matter to the decision of practical men, who by virtue of their position had thorough knowledge of the whole subject, was as wise as it was praiseworthy will be evident if we reflect that, had the struggle gone on to the bitter end, it was almost inevitable that some such means of settlement would have had to be resorted to at the last, while immense inconvenience and loss would in the meantime have been inflicted upon both parties and upon the public as well. It is gratifying also to learn that the trouble between the Grand Trunk's officers and men, which threatened a day or two since to become serious, is in process of adjustment by friendly conference. The good example set by these peaceful methods will not be

lost, we may be sure, upon other bodies. It will have a powerful influence for peace. There is a good deal to be said in favour of such a proposal as that which is being urged upon the Government by the Dominion Trades and Labour Council, making arbitration in such cases compulsory upon both parties. It is certainly intolerable that, in the case of a railway, for instance, which, like the C. P. R., has been built very largely at the public expense, the public should be compelled, as seemed at one time probable in this struggle, to suffer great loss and inconvenience while waiting for the managers to settle some difficulty with their men. But there are obviously very great difficulties in the way of such legislation. It will be vastly better if all concerned will adopt the method of their own good sense and free will.

WE have no wish to make a hobby of the need of a purification of Canadian politics, though undoubtedly a journal might do much worse than set up reform in this particular as its goal. We have often had occasion to criticize Government devices and methods. In so doing it is impossible not to feel sometimes a strong sympathy with the Opposition, which finds itself handicapped in so many ways. But what of the Opposition itself? Was that remarkable letter which the *Empire* printed the other day really written by the chief campaign manager of the Dominion Opposition and the Ontario Government? We have looked in vain to see it repudiated by Mr. Preston, or, failing that, its author repudiated by the party which prides itself on being the "Party of Purity." We have so far looked in vain. Are we, then, to conclude that the trusted manager of the said party connived at and took part in a clear violation of the law which Liberals struggled so long to have enacted, by purchasing Grand Trunk tickets for the use of voters going to deposit their ballots for the party candidates? That is what appears on the face of the letter. It may be true that the Canadian Pacific carried voters for the other party without charge, from all parts of the Dominion. It certainly is a strange law, or a strange interpretation of it, which permits a great corporation to do with impunity what a private individual or party agent is forbidden to do under penalty. But those who seek to reform the law must not themselves be law-breakers. Those who would effectively declaim against bribery must not themselves practise it. Surely some explanation of that letter is due to the public. If the manager fails to give it, the party leaders should enquire into the matter. It was a Dominion election, of course, but Mr. Preston is understood to be none the less, but rather the more, the manager for the party in Ontario. What does Mr. Mowat think of such methods?

AT first thought Mr. McCarthy's proposal to have a representative of the Dominion attached to the staff of Her Majesty's Ministers at Washington, "specially charged to watch, guard, and represent the interests of Canada," strikes one very favourably. Further reflection tends, perhaps, to make it doubtful whether the presence of such an agent, on any footing which would be possible under existing circumstances, could be of much advantage to Canada. The position of such a representative would necessarily be of a somewhat nondescript kind. The British Government might have no objection to the admission of a clever Canadian, as a mere attaché of the Legation. In this capacity a well-informed and judicious agent might sometimes be of use to the Minister as an adviser, but communication with Ottawa is so easy and would in most cases be so much more satisfactory that even in this respect the usefulness of the Canadian representative would be reduced to the minimum. The only position in which such an agent could be of real service would be denied him by the necessity of the case. It is not to be expected that the American Government, who even now complain, not without some reason, of the interposition of Canada as a third and, diplomatically considered, irresponsible party, in all its negotiations with the British Government, could or would give to the Canadian representative any such recognition as would enable him to exert an appreciable influence in international affairs. Hence, it may be questioned whether the position would not be an embarrassing, not to say humiliating, one for the representative of a country which claims and exercises so many of the prerogatives of nationality as the Dominion. It would also be humiliating to ourselves as well to find that our envoy could obtain no recognition and perform no function as such, but only as a member of the staff of the Imperial