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CURRENT TOPICS.

We have before expressed the hope that Canadian politics have passed the lowest point of trickery and corruption, and that henceforth more honourable methods are to prevail. We confess, however, that the indications are not all so favourable as we should like to see them. It is rather discouraging that the Government and its supporters have no better defence to offer against the charge of "gerrymandering" than the *tu quoque* retort to the effect that the opposite party also resort to bribery. The statement that the former Liberal party was corrupt, whether true or not, is a poor refutation of a very serious charge brought against the present Government. We had hoped to hear either an indignant

denial that any gerrymandering had been done, or a distinct declaration of immediate reform. The fact is that to admit even tacitly the existence of such unfairness in the last redistribution as that charged is to destroy the whole force of the argument drawn from the alleged repeated approval of the Government's policy by the people at the polls. It would also be equally effective in reply to the Finance Minister's declaration that the representation of the Opposition with reference to the robbery effected by the N. P. cannot be true, because the people of Canada are free men and women, and slaves to no party.

If it be true, as now reported from Ottawa, that the Government has decided to submit the French treaty for ratification by Parliament, it is evident that its assailants, coming from various points of the compass, will give those set up to defend it some uncomfortable half-hours. It seems impossible that the Finance Minister, who should naturally take charge of the treaty during its passage through the House, can display much enthusiasm in its support. Neither the House nor the public will have so soon forgotten his attitude towards it last session. It is very unlikely that there is any truth in the rumour that it is the intention of the Government to propitiate Sir Charles Tupper, negotiator of the treaty, and avoid offending French susceptibilities, by having the treaty ratified by the Commons, only to be thrown out by the Senators. A precedent might be found for such a proceeding in the well known case of the rejection of the Liberal Government's British Columbia railway bill by the Upper House, after it had passed the Commons. We do not remember that there was any suspicion of collusion between the Government and the Senate, in that case, although Premier Mackenzie's evident readiness to accept the Senate's decision as final, against an expenditure which he was very loth to make, was somewhat too apparent. We do not look for any such display or real or assumed independence by the Senate in the matter of the treaty, but we shall be surprised if even the Government's influence be not pretty well strained before the treaty can be made satisfactory to the Commons.

It is now clear, as we felt certain the event would prove, that the sensational reports of difficulties between the British and American Governments in regard to the adoption of measures for carrying into

effect the provisions of the Paris award, were without any substantial basis. The necessary legislation is now proceeding simultaneously at Westminster and at Washington, and, from present prospects it is likely to be completed in Parliament quite as soon as in Congress. More could hardly be expected. It is not unlikely, in view of the fact that the regulations will bear hardly upon the Canadian industry, that the Ottawa Government may have made representations to the Imperial Government with a view to having the laws for carrying out those regulations made as lenient as possible. There is too much reason to fear that at the best the enforcement of the regulations will prove fatal to the Canadian sealing industry. This season's operations will probably decide that question. Meanwhile, in view of what is known concerning the legislation now being enacted by both parties, there may be too much reason for the apprehensions of the *Morning Post*, lest these should lead to future friction. The authorizing the ships of either nation to seize those of the other seems a ticklish business, and the commanders on both sides will need to proceed with great caution. A little jingoism on either part might lead to serious complications.

Lord Rosebery's complaint of the disadvantage under which a peer is placed in being ineligible for the House of Commons was largely discounted as the saying of a Radical leader. A different face is put upon the matter when the same complaint is made by Conservative peers. It is announced that three Conservative members of the Commons, who are in daily dread of becoming peers, are preparing a bill to provide that any member of the Commons who may fall heir to a peerage shall have the option of remaining in the House, if a member of that body at the time of his succession to the peerage, and if not, of offering himself as a candidate for election to that House, in preference to taking his seat in the Lords. It seems only fair and reasonable that such option should be given to men of ability and ambition, who may have already begun to distinguish themselves, but whose careers would be cut short by their entrance into the Upper Chamber. The best interests of the nation, too, demand that no obstacle be placed in the way of the natural selection of the best political talent available from any quarter for the public service. Whatever truth there may be in the commonly received maxims about the degeneracy of the scions of the aristocracy,