

THANKS to the efforts of the Ontario Women's Christian Temperance Union, we believe, a Bill is now before the Ontario Legislature for the prohibition of the sale of tobacco—we presume other strong narcotics will be included—to boys under a certain age. Whatever may be our opinions in regard to the sweeping measures of prohibition sought by this and similar organizations in the case of intoxicating liquors, few thoughtful persons will doubt either the propriety or the necessity of legislation in the direction indicated. There can be, we suppose, no serious difference of opinion amongst scientific men with regard to the terribly deleterious effects of the tobacco habit in the case of boys of tender years. The most devoted lover of the weed, if he be intelligent and a parent, will scarcely hesitate to approve of the principle of the Bill in question. Indeed we can scarcely conceive of any solid grounds for opposition to the passage of a judicious measure of the kind. The staple objections to the principle of prohibition cannot apply here, because all must admit the necessity for restrictions upon the liberty of the young until they arrive at the years of discretion and become capable of judging for themselves. There are few more painful sights than those which daily meet the eye in the streets of Toronto or any other town or city in Canada, lads scarcely yet in their "teens" inhaling the fumes of the narcotic in what is we believe admitted to be one of its deadliest forms—that of the cigarette. The wonder is that legislators and people alike have been so slow to move against this undoubted evil by cutting off the sources of supply. The principle of prohibition involved is already recognized by universal consent in the case of liquors, hence its extension so as to include tobacco does not mean the application of any new principle of legislation. If there is any doubt on the part of any honourable member whether the effects of the tobacco habit upon the young are really so serious as to warrant legislative interference, it might not be amiss for a committee to interrogate three or four of the ablest and most experienced physicians of the City or Province on the point. Unless their observations have led them to very different conclusions from those reached by many scientific men who have testified on the subject, it will be found to be practically beyond dispute that the effect of the excessive use of the drug by lads—and the tendency will always be to excess in such cases—are not simply physical but mental and moral deterioration, verging in the worst cases on actual imbecility. If this be so, can there be any valid excuse for hesitation in passing and as far as possible enforcing a stringent law to prohibit the sale of tobacco in any form to boys under a certain age, or even to all minors? Is it not a duty to society and to the State to protect the young and inexperienced from the consequences of their own lack of wisdom, and from the cupidity of those who are willing to take advantage of their youthful vanity and folly?

DR. BOURINOT, the Author; Dawson Brothers, the Publishers; Trinity College, Toronto, to whom as his *Alma Mater* it is dedicated by the author; and above all the people of the Dominion of Canada, for whose behoof the work has been written, are to be congratulated upon the appearance of a second edition, revised, enlarged and brought up to date, of Bourinot's "Parliamentary Procedure and Practice." Next to the possession of constitutional freedom and responsible government by any people, and in fact essential to the full enjoyment of the benefits which such a system is intended to confer, is an intelligent understanding on the part of the people of the exact nature and the proper workings and limits of their political machinery. To this end the man who devotes years of study and toil to the production of a simple, reliable, and in virtue of its own intrinsic merits, authoritative, exposition of the system thus established, not only deserves well of his fellow-citizens, but becomes one of the benefactors of his country. Apart altogether from its direct practical utility, the work before us is a most valuable educational treatise. It is not easy to conceive of any other work of a secular character whose perusal is better calculated to stimulate the thought and enlarge the intelligence of all who may read it. Not the least of its many merits is that it is written in so clear a style that any person of ordinary education can easily master its substance. Indeed, so struck have we been with this characteristic of the book, in looking over it, that it seems to us worthy of serious enquiry by the educational authorities of the different Provinces, whether a place should not be found for it as a text-book at some stage of the educational course, not farther advanced than the High Schools,

in order that at least a large percentage of the people of the Dominion might enter upon the duties of citizenship with a clear understanding of the political system of their own country. That very many Canadians of fair education and intelligence do not now possess such knowledge is a fact which may be easily verified by anyone who has any doubts in regard to the matter, though it is not necessary to suppose that our people are less well informed on such matters than the average in any other country. Most certainly no one should be considered qualified for the position of a public school teacher who is unable to pass an examination on at least a large portion of such a work as this. Something of the kind is, we are aware, expected of teachers, in Ontario at least, under the present regulations, but the writer has had opportunities very recently to discover that some of those teachers have, as a matter of fact, but the faintest and dimmest ideas, if their shadowy notions are even worthy of that name, in regard to the whole subject.

FIRST and by no means least valuable in the Table of Contents of Dr. Bourinot's book is an admirably clear and succinct sketch of the constitutional history of Canada. Those, and there are many such among our own people, who have the impression that Canada has no history worth studying or writing would, we think, very materially modify that notion could they be induced to read carefully this introductory chapter, which is not a whit too long though it occupies nearly one-sixth of the whole volume of more than 900 pages. Though our country has, happily, not many great victories on the battle field to be recorded, the story of the slow and toil-some stages by which she has passed from a state of the completest political tutelage to the possession of the large measure of constitutional freedom she enjoys to-day, is in most other respects a reproduction on a somewhat diminutive scale of the similar processes of development through struggle and against the selfishness and unscrupulousness of privilege entrenched in power, which constitute the most instructive portions of the history of the greatest and freest nations on earth. It is, perhaps, but a natural consequence of having had his attention so long engaged more fully with the history and development of our written constitution, and the abstract character of the institutions which are both the outgrowth of that constitution and designed to perpetuate it, that Dr. Bourinot takes a much more sanguine view of the results and prospects at the present date than many of his readers will be able to do. We cannot refrain from reproducing the following glowing picture of the outcome of the long process of development. At the same time we can hardly refrain from thinking, as we know that many of our readers will think, that the picture, in one or two important particulars, represents the scene as it should be rather than as it is: "With a federal system which combines at once central strength and local freedom of action; with a permanent executive independent of popular caprice and passion; with a judiciary on whose integrity there is no blemish, and in whose learning there is every confidence; with a civil service resting on the firm basis of freedom from politics and of security of tenure; with a people who respect the law and fully understand the workings of parliamentary institutions, the Dominion of Canada need not fear comparison with any other country in those things which make a community truly happy and prosperous." It adds not a little to the value of this introductory chapter that in this second edition it contains all the important judicial decisions which have been reached from time to time on questions of jurisdiction between the Dominion and the Provinces. In the succeeding chapters, which constitute the body of the book, dealing with the constitution and working of the Senate and the House of Commons, the relations between the two Houses, the powers and privileges of Parliament, its rules, usages and modes of procedure, its laws of debate, its various committees, etc., Dr. Bourinot's book is too well known as an authority of the highest class to need a word of commendation from us. The General Observations on the Practical Operation of Parliamentary Government in Canada, in the closing chapter, fittingly supplement the historical introduction above referred to. It is, of course, too much to expect that the mastery of so complex a system of laws and precedents by any one author should be perfect, or that in such statements as necessarily partake more or less of the nature of interpretations or opinions, he should command universal assent. But it is, as we have said, matter for congratulation that Canadians have

as a text-book and authority on all questions of constitution, law and procedure, a work second to none that has ever been published, even in Great Britain.

BEFORE this number of THE WEEK reaches the hands of its readers the results of the fierce electoral struggle now going on in the Province of Quebec will have become known. It would be worse than useless, therefore, to indulge in any speculations, based upon the doings of nomination day or other indications. In any event, the future history of the unfortunate Province of Quebec is wrapped in uncertainty and gloom. Should the DeBoucherville Government be sustained by a working majority, and should its members set themselves ever so honestly and resolutely to raise the Province out of the financial slough into which the extravagance of two successive administrations and the dishonesty of at least one of them have brought it, the task will inevitably be a herculean one. To rehabilitate its shattered moral reputation will be scarcely less difficult. And then Mercier, whether defeated or victorious, will still be able to exert a potent and baleful influence upon the course of events. If defeated, there seems much reason to fear that the sympathy he may be able to arouse on his behalf, as having been sacrificed to the partisanship of a Lieut.-Governor, combined with the strong personal attachment of a considerable section of his former adherents, may make him still a formidable force in provincial politics and legislation. Should he, on the other hand, as seemed until lately far from improbable, succeed in retaining an absolute majority of the representatives as his supporters, it is difficult to conjecture what would follow. The Province would be regarded abroad and in the other Provinces of the Dominion as having deliberately declared in favour of, or at least as having refused to condemn, theft from the treasury as a means of securing funds for party purposes—a result for which we cannot but think Mr. Angers' autocratic and partisan course would be largely responsible. Be that as it may, the situation would be a most embarrassing one, not only for Mr. Angers, but for the Dominion. There is, indeed, a third possibility which looks just now almost like a strong probability. It may be that neither the existing Government nor Mr. Mercier may succeed in gaining an absolute majority in the Legislature, but that the event may leave the balance of power in the hands of those who are running as "Independent Liberals," opposed, we may suppose, alike to both the De Boucherville and the Mercier parties. The choice would then be, no doubt, between a temporary and insecure tenure of office by the present Administration and a reconstructed Liberal Cabinet with Mr. Mercier and those of his late colleagues who connived at his dishonest methods left out. But the possibility of such a reconstruction would depend on one or other of two very improbable contingencies. Either Mr. Mercier would have to perform an unlikely act of self-effacement, or those who had just been elected as his supporters would have to turn their backs on him at the first opportunity. We shall soon see what we shall see.

IN the absence of fuller information it is difficult to judge of the merits of the new difficulty which is said to have sprung up between the British and American Governments in connection with the Behring Sea negotiations. There are some facts which it is hard to reconcile with the statements which come from Washington correspondents in respect to the alleged difficulties. If our memory serves us, it was but a few weeks ago that these same Washington correspondents were telling us that American statesmen were becoming restive at Lord Salisbury's delay in signing the Treaty of Arbitration and suspected him of seeking to prolong negotiations in order to render a renewal of the *modus vivendi* necessary, thus giving the Canadian fishermen another season for poaching. Subsequent events pointed to the view that the delay was at Washington rather than at Westminster. Now it is alleged that the refusal of the British Premier to renew that same *modus vivendi* is resented by the American Government as something approaching a breach of faith, or at least a piece of sharp practice. This, too, though Lord Salisbury's alleged offer to prohibit sealing within a circle of thirty miles radius around the breeding islands is said to be even better for American interests than a previous proposal by Mr. Blaine. Unless Mr. Blaine is really holding to the claim of exclusive jurisdiction over the whole Sea, a claim which, by the way, it has been denied that he ever seriously made, it is difficult to believe that he has refused, or will refuse, the thirty mile limit if