

# THE WEEK.

Seventh Year.  
Vol. VII. No. 51.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21st, 1890.

\$3.00 per Annum.  
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

## THE WEEK:

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART

TERMS:—One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.50. Subscriptions payable in advance.  
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No advertisements charged less than five lines. Address—T. R. CLOUGHIER, Business Manager, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto.  
C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

### CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

TOPICS—	PAGE
Canadian Commercial Enterprise.....	803
Toronto Sanatorium Association.....	803
Mr. Ritchie's Proposal.....	803
The Principles Involved.....	803
Is the Guarantee Necessary?.....	804
An Outspoken Address.....	804
The Fall of a Leader.....	804
Mr. Balfour in Ireland.....	804
A Field for University Reform.....	804
An Important Enquiry.....	805
A Sugar Trust Decision.....	805
Dr. Koch's Medical Discovery.....	805
PARIS LETTER.....	Z.
MY STAR. (Poem).....	Arthur Weir. 806
ABOLITION OF THE GRAND JURY.....	A. F. Pirie. 806
LONDON LETTER.....	Walter Powell. 806
MATAWANDA (Concluded).....	Malcolm W. Sparrow. 807
MID LOFTY PEAKS. (Sonnet).....	Samuel M. Baylis. 808
THE RAMBLER.....	808
A GLANCE AT "THE GOOD OLD TIMES".....	809
AN AUTUMN WREATH. (Poem).....	Sarepta. 810
PROFESSOR BALDWIN'S PSYCHOLOGY.....	810
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.....	810
ART NOTES.....	811
MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.....	811
OUR LIBRARY TABLE.....	812
LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.....	812
PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.....	813
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.....	813
CHESS.....	814

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

OVER one hundred MSS. have been received by THE WEEK for its Short Story Prize Competition. These are now in the hands of the judges; but some time must necessarily elapse before their labours can be completed. The awards will be announced in these columns at the earliest possible moment.

WHATEVER views may be held in regard to the soundness of their policy of protection and high taxation, few will be disposed to deny to the Ottawa Government their meed of praise for the activity and energy they are displaying in seeking to enlarge the area and volume of Canadian commerce. There is undeniably a good deal of force in the objection that it is somewhat illogical to build up barriers against importation with one hand while seeking to open up new channels for exportation with the other. The maxim that all trade must be in the very nature of things reciprocal is no less true than trite. In the abstract, at least, our English advisers who counsel free trade, or the nearest practicable approach to it, as the antidote to McKinleyism on the part of our neighbours, and the panacea for all commercial ills, may have the best of the argument. On the other hand, the proposition that the nation which manufactures, and that nation only, can ever become largely and permanently prosperous is equally demonstrable. The sum is that in so far as the advocates of the National Policy can demonstrate that protection is the *sine qua non* of extensive and successful manufacturing in Canada, to that extent can they meet the logic of their opponents. But waiving these debatable questions of political economy, and looking at things as they are now and here, it must be admitted by all that the strenuous efforts being made to find foreign markets for our surplus products are highly commendable. It is not easy to see why the visit of the Minister of Finance to the British West Indies and other Southern countries may not result in a very considerable enlargement of our traffic with those countries. We know not whether Mr. Foster is authorized to adopt Mr. Blaine's reciprocity policy, or, as rumour has it, to attempt to beat him at his own game by offering better terms, but as we have many products that are needed in those southern localities and they have some which are indispensable to us, there should be no great difficulty in making arrangements for a larger and more profitable interchange than heretofore. Then, again, thanks to the interested enterprise of the Canadian Pacific

Railway Company and the foresight of the Government, combined, the time is drawing near when an adequate maritime service will be established between the western terminus of the railway and the great world in the East and South Pacific. While we are not so sanguine as we could wish to be in regard to the ability of our protected manufacturers to compete on a large scale with those of free trade England, we yet cannot doubt that a very desirable increase of trade must ensue from the opening of these new routes. It will be no small gain if the enterprise is the means, as it almost surely will be, of turning a considerable stream of European travel and traffic across our part of the continent. Even those who regard all our best hopes and prospects as dependent upon freer intercourse with our American neighbours can hardly deny that it is desirable to have as many strings as possible to our commercial bow, and must watch with interest the development of these new lines of traffic. In this connection the suggestion of Hon. William Davies, a member of the Executive Council of the Leeward Islands, who proposes that Canada should take another leaf out of Mr. Blaine's book by calling together a trade congress representing the British American Colonies, is worthy of consideration. Possibly Mr. Foster's visit may either pave the way to such action or render it unnecessary.

ONE result of the great progress of medical science is suggested by the Prospectus of the Toronto Sanatorium Association, now on our table. That result is manifest in the tendency to apply treatment based on scientific principles to ailments which were formerly regarded as entirely moral in their character, and consequently beyond the reach of medical skill. Thus it has been found that scientific treatment under proper conditions may often be applied with the best results to inebriates and to those suffering from other forms of mania or enslavement to the alcoholic, opium, or other habits, resulting from the abuse of narcotics. The object of the Sanatorium is to provide for the care and treatment of the unhappy victims of narco-mania in any of its forms. The Prospectus assures us that the experience of institutions of this kind, both in England and the United States, where they are very numerous, fully justifies their establishment. The wonderful success which they have achieved is ample proof of the immense benefit patients have received from a temporary residence therein. Carefully prepared statistics, extending over a number of years, have proven beyond controversy that the number of permanent cures are in a like ratio to that of any other chronic disease. Notwithstanding its numerous institutions for the treatment of almost every other form of malady, Toronto is up to this time without any provision for the treatment and cure of this unfortunate class of sufferers. A joint stock company has been formed with a capital of \$50,000, and a strong Board of Directors, with Alderman Gillespie as President, has been duly elected for the founding and carrying on of such an institution. While the enterprise is to be conducted on business principles, it has none the less a philanthropic purpose and deserves success and the best wishes of the charitably disposed.

THE proposal recently made by Mr. S. J. Ritchie, President of the Central Ontario Railway, and a large proprietor in nickel and iron mines in the Sudbury district, to the Dominion Government, is one of great magnitude in regard both to the outlay involved and the results promised. There can no longer be any doubt that in the vast iron and nickel deposits which exist in the neighbourhood of Sudbury Canada possesses a property of immense value. It is equally certain that the value of this property to the Province and the Dominion would be greatly enhanced could these ores be smelted on the spot, and exported in the form of nickel steel, instead of in their crude state. Mr. Ritchie's proposal is, first, that the Government aid in the completion of the Central Ontario road from Coe Hill to Sudbury, the bonus to be of the usual amount, \$6,000 a mile; and, secondly, that a guarantee of three per cent. be given on the stock of the steel plant. Of the Central Ontario road 110 miles is already built. It will be necessary to add 210 miles, and to build

thirty miles additional to connect the various mines with the smelting plant. The subsidy asked approaches \$1,500,000. The capital necessary for the operation of the mines, and the purchase and setting up of the plant, which is to be of the capacity of ten furnaces, is \$5,000,000. The guarantee at three per cent. will therefore involve an outlay of \$150,000 a year. Mr. Ritchie's figures are intended to show that these subsidies will lead to the investment of \$16,000,000 in the country, beyond the two and a-half millions already spent in the building of the Central Ontario road so far as it has gone, and to the establishment of a great and permanent new industry.

TO our thinking Mr. Ritchie's proposal divides itself into two distinct parts, involving somewhat different principles. Were his application simply for the usual subsidy for the railway necessary to reach the mining district, and were it accompanied with a satisfactory guarantee that the mines would be worked to a sufficient extent to provide a reasonable amount of traffic for the road so constructed, there could hardly be two opinions about the matter. The principle of subsidizing railroads, whether sound or otherwise in the abstract, has long since been established in Canada, and few roads, completed or projected, could lay a stronger claim for the customary aid. The other part of the proposition involves, if not an entirely new principle, at least an entirely new application of that already conceded. So far as we are aware, no Canadian Government has ever guaranteed the stock of any private manufacturing company. We do not think it has ever before been asked to do so. Formidable objections to such a use of the public funds, or the public credit, start up at various points. Suppose the request granted, the guarantee given, and Mr. Ritchie's company grandly successful, as there seems every reason to believe it would be if well managed, the company would sooner or later become an immensely wealthy corporation. Unless precautionary measures were devised and taken, it would be very likely to become also a great monopoly. In the case of a railroad, the relations of the company to the Government and to the people are such that it can never divest itself of a semi-public character. It is subject to legislation as such, and may therefore be compelled at any time by legislation to consult the public interests as well as its own. No such conditions, so far as we are able to see, would limit the absolute right of the manufacturing company in question to conduct its business solely with a view to its own interests, whether those should chance at any time to agree or to clash with those of its employees or the public. Again, would the Government be prepared to follow up the precedent? Would it hold itself in readiness to guarantee the stock of any other company whose operations should bid fair to be of advantage to the country, in proportion to the magnitude of the prospective advantage? If not, why not? Would not the projectors of such enterprises, whether in the Sudbury region or elsewhere, have just reason to complain of the discrimination by which they were taxed for the benefit of this particular company, while themselves refused similar favours?

NOTWITHSTANDING the foregoing queries we are not prepared to take the ground absolutely and unreservedly that no such guarantee as that asked by Mr. Ritchie should be given. Exceptional cases sometimes warrant extraordinary measures. We have a very high conception of the greatness of the benefits such an enterprise would prove to the whole country, if successfully carried out on the scale indicated. But the consequences seemingly involved in such a new departure are so serious as to demand the most searching enquiry and the most careful consideration. Is it by any means certain that no company can be found or formed able and willing to undertake the work on its own capital and responsibility? Mr. Ritchie thinks not, though he admits that, were the mines in question located in some country better known, there would be no difficulty in the case. This argument appears to us, we must confess, rather weak. We had an impression that in these days many enterprising companies and capitalists were quite prepared to engage in large undertakings in new countries, if only the inducements