

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

### A Precarious Situation

Precarious, indeed, is just now the situation of the Liberal Government in England. So far as one can gather from observations made at this distance, the chances are about even for its immediate overthrow, and its continuance through the session with a very small majority. The result depends largely upon the action, first of the Anti-Parnellite faction, and second of the small band of ultra-Radicals, of whom Mr. Laibouchere and Sir Charles Dilke are the leaders, as well as rank and file. The course of either of these contingents is unpredictable. The situation is as interesting as it is critical. Should the Government manage to pull through the session, and to get two or three of the measures upon which the hearts of the Liberals are particularly set, carried through the Commons, to be thrown out, as they almost certainly would be, by the Lords, Lord Rosebery's chances at the coming election would, no doubt, be considerably improved. Should the Government, on the other hand, be defeated at the outset, its prospects in the election would be gloomy indeed. The fact is that, in consequence of the sectional and factional divisions among its supporters, or those who are generally counted as such, the Government was weak when Mr. Gladstone retired. Owing largely to the loss of the old leader, and the bad impression made by his successor at the outset, it has been growing weaker ever since. It is true that Lord Rosebery has been giving better satisfaction to his followers of late. His speech on disestablishment, a week or two since, seems to have almost satisfied the most ardent enemies of the Establishment among his followers, though even it contained some traces of the opportunism which is his great weakness as a Liberal leader. On the whole it is not unlikely that the improvement comes too late. There is, however, one chance in his favour. It is always possible that the Grand Old Man may re-appear upon the scene, and rouse his admirers to such a pitch of enthusiasm as to carry the party over all obstacles. A few days will now decide the question, "to be or not to be," for the first part of the session at least.

### The Proposed New Hotel.

Some exception has been taken to the opening paragraph of an article on the proposed new Toronto hotel which appeared in our last number. It was said that it seemed hardly fair for the University of Toronto or the Ontario Government to bonus a new hotel by a gift of valuable land to enable a number of gentlemen to enter into competition with hotels carried on by private enterprise. No doubt every question has two sides and the other side in this case is that the University and the Government together own three blocks of land which it is desirable to convert into business property as rapidly as possible. The Government and the University authorities think it in the interests of this property to give about one-tenth of it to such an enterprise as the hotel referred to. It is not for them to say whether such a hotel could be or should be assisted by the city; they are simply willing if the hotel is to be built and has a fair prospect of being maintained to give this portion of their property in order to benefit the balance. It is a common thing for private land owners to deed away part of their land in order to render the remainder more saleable; they do not see that any different rule applies to the Government and the trustees of the University in dealing with their property.

### The Mail-Empire Amalgamation.

The proprietors of the *Mail* and the *Empire* are to be congratulated on the union which has at length been consummated. Such union must bring increased strength, not only financial, but intellectual and moral. The combination can scarcely fail to prove a strong one. Whether we should feel at liberty to congratulate the public, also, depends largely, we suppose, upon the views one may hold with regard to the relative merits of a pronounced party newspaper, and of one seeking to maintain an independent attitude. If we are to have party newspapers, and they are, evidently, a corollary of party government, and perhaps quite as defensible, it is well that they should be strong and able. The more powerful they are, in the matter of both staff and finance, the better for all concerned. The firmly established paper can more easily afford to be outspoken and impartial upon occasion than a weak one, dependent largely upon Government patronage for support. There has been a marked and very gratifying change for the better in the tone of some of our leading papers during the last few years. The vituperation and abuse so common not long since have given way to a style of editorial writing which is calm, dignified, and, we may add, powerful in comparison. The *Mail-Empire* will have a grand opportunity to set an example which will be a still further improvement upon this reform. We shall expect the public will expect, much from the renovated paper. We shall not despair of one day seeing in its columns, and in those of rivals who may emulate its candour and courtesy, even an admission that on some question, or in regard to some matter of policy, the Opposition, or the Government, as the case may be, may possibly be right. Who knows? May the marriage prove happy and prosperous!

### The Canadian Press Association.

The thirty-seventh annual meeting of the Canadian Press Association, held in Toronto last week, was the most notable in the history of that society, mainly because it had been made the