

THE WEEK.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th, 1891.

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

Eighth Year.
Vol. VIII., No. 43.

THE WEEK:

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART

TERMS:—One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.00
Subscriptions payable in advance.
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No advertisements charged less than five lines. Address—T. R.
CLOUGHER, Business Manager, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto.
C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

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THOSE who had hoped that the members of the Canadian Commons were at length fully awake to the necessity of resolute action to purify the atmosphere and elevate the tone of political life in the Dominion must have had their faith seriously shaken by the results of the Cochrane investigation. A more lame and impotent conclusion than that reached by the majority vote on Friday morning it would be hard to imagine. The whole system, which treats every office, high or low, in the gift of the Government, as a party perquisite, to be given to the faithful as a reward for party service is utterly bad. But if there is a lower depth to which practical politics under the manipulation of partyism can fall, that depth is surely reached when petty offices are put up at auction by local wire-pullers, empowered to use the patronage influence of the Member for the constituency as a means of exacting contributions to the funds of the party. When a majority of twenty-five in the Canadian House of Commons, all of whom are supposed to have heard or read the evidence taken before the Cochrane Committee, can solemnly declare by their votes that the sums of money exacted from those who received the appointments in question were voluntary contributions, and that there was no evidence of knowledge and complicity on the part of the representative of the riding, it is evident that there is no longer anything to hope for from the high moral sense of the House, as at present constituted. As Colonel O'Brien pointed out, the evidence may not have been, and probably was not, sufficiently direct and conclusive to warrant the finding of the minority report and the exemplary condemnation and punishment of Mr. Cochrane. But in the light of the evidence, and in the absence of any denial on oath from himself, it would be hard, we believe, for any intelligent and candid man seriously to doubt that Mr. Cochrane did know of the methods which were being adopted by the Committee, though, on the other hand, few will claim that the fact was proved in a manner that would or should satisfy a court of justice, or warrant a verdict of guilty. It is to be regretted that the Opposition, blinded in their turn, we suppose, by party feeling, had not seen the last mentioned fact and modified their report accordingly. Had they done so, it is almost inconceivable that a resolution

constructed on the lines indicated in Colonel O'Brien's eminently fair and judicial speech, could have been voted down by any majority, however subservient. The effect of such a finding, while it might not have involved the expulsion and perhaps criminal prosecution of the Member, would have been to declare emphatically before the country and the world that a great political crime had been committed, and that the people's representatives in Parliament did not hesitate to stamp and reprobate it as such. As the matter now stands, every intelligent elector who places political morality above party must agree with Colonel O'Brien that the mild statement at the end of the report, which met the approval of the House, that the transactions of the Patronage Committee in East Northumberland were reprehensible, fails altogether to give the country a true idea of their nature, and that the conclusions of the report itself are paltry, inadequate, and even "contemptible." It is possible to believe, with one Member who supported the majority report, that the Committee of East Northumberland electors who sold the offices did not realize that they were doing anything very wrong; but such an opinion saves their honour at the expense of their intelligence and moral perception, and, if accepted, would itself be one of the strongest reasons why the pronouncement of Parliament should have been clear and unmistakable. The most singular and suggestive remark in the whole debate was that of Mr. Skinner, who wound up the ablest speech made in defence of Mr. Cochrane, with the ambiguous declaration that "taking the whole case together, the hon. member for East Northumberland comes out of it with clean skirts, and if not entirely clean, they are as clean as is necessary for his protection in this House." Such a remark from the chief advocate of the report, combined with the singing of the chorus "He's a Jolly Good Fellow" by the victorious majority, completes a view of the Canadian Commons which we are sorry to have set before the British and American public.

THE verdict of the Commons in the case of Mr. Cochrane may no doubt be taken as foreshadowing that which will be rendered in the case of Sir Hector Langevin. The issues involved are very similar. The main point for a thoroughly independent and conscientious member to decide is whether any and if so what weight should be allowed in a matter involving the reputation and political life of a Member of Parliament, or a Minister of the Crown, to moral as distinguished from legal evidence, or, to put it otherwise, to probability as a ground of action. If the legal maxim that a person is to be held innocent until he has been proved guilty by evidence satisfactory to a Court of Justice be made the rule of Parliamentary action, no room is left for hesitation in either of the cases in question, or, indeed, in most others in which the conduct of a shrewd politician is involved. If on the other hand the principle were adopted, in favour of which there is a good deal to be said, that a Member of Parliament, and above all a Minister of the Crown, must be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion, the practical results would no doubt be serious. To act on the first or strictly legal rule, as the Government and its supporters seem to have done in the Cochrane case, is to do away with the chief advantages of a Parliamentary investigation. If that is the admitted principle, it would obviously be much better to refer all questions involving the reputation of a Minister or Member at once to a properly constituted court, thereby saving much of the time and expense of an enquiry by a Committee of Parliament, and securing with a much greater degree of certainty a correct judgment. The reports of the proceedings of the Committees, especially that of the Public Accounts Committee, show that there is a wide difference of opinion among the Members on this point of procedure, the Government partisans on the Committee generally seeking to apply the strict rules of court practice, those of the Opposition contending for liberty to pursue the investigation freely without regard to judicial rules and precedents. Indeed, if we are not much mistaken it would not be very hard to show that the views of the same members of the Committee are not always the same to day as yesterday in regard to the strictness or otherwise with which legal principles and rules should be applied. Many of the sharp disputes which have made the meetings of

the Committees badly famous have arisen in regard to this point. Mr. Lister protested the other day in strong language against the persistent obstruction which, he alleged, he had had constantly to meet in his efforts to elicit the truth from reluctant witnesses. It is a great pity that the Committee had not reached a clear decision before entering upon the investigation in regard to the laws by which its proceedings should be governed. To the onlooker, anxious only to see the whole truth brought out, it does seem not a little strange and suspicious that the Members of the Government on the Committee should carry their adherence to alleged legal customs so far as to prevent the reading of evidence taken in connection with a trial in court, on which Mr. Lister relied to establish the infirmities of memory of a former witness who had gone out of reach. Whatever may be the legal aspects of the matter, it was surely bad policy on the part of the friends of the Secretary of State to object to the reading of any document having an important bearing upon the question of his complicity in a doubtful or corrupt agreement. If Mr. Chapleau is, as he protests, utterly innocent in the matter, he has nothing to fear from any evidence that may be forthcoming, and he and his friends should welcome everything from every source that would help to bring out the whole truth.

UNIVERSITY Extension, the meaning and advantages of which were so well described in Dr. Laflamme's address, quoted and commented on by Dr. Grant in our columns last week, is, we make bold to say, the most interesting and important of the many educational movements to which the last half century has given birth. Dr. Grant calls attention to the fears that have been expressed in some high educational circles, lest in our zeal for University Extension we so dissipate the time and energies of our Professors as to find in the end that we have little left in the universities worth extending, and observes that this warning "ought to make thoughtful men pause and consider the whole matter thoroughly before trying the experiment in Canada." Such thorough consideration will, we are persuaded, convince the thoughtful not only that the fear of possible injury to the universities is groundless, but that University Extension, on sound principles successfully carried out, could not fail to prove most helpful and stimulating to the work of the university proper. To put the reasons which seem to us to warrant this assurance as briefly as possible, we may say that the two great needs of our universities, and of most American universities, are money and students. When these two are forthcoming all else can be provided with comparative ease, if the business is in the right hands. Now, a moment's reflection will show us that the supplies of both these essentials are sure to increase in direct ratio with the numbers of those who become interested in the work of the universities; in other words, in the higher education. If, then, by a well-wrought system of University Extension, three persons could be thoroughly interested in the work of the universities—as everyone will be who is made sharer to a greater or less extent in the advantages they offer—for everyone who is now so interested, it naturally and almost of necessity follows that there would be in a short time a corresponding increase in both students and endowments. It may, therefore, be safely prophesied that the institution which gives its aid and influence freely, generously, heartily to this good work of bringing facilities for higher education within the reach of multitudes who have hitherto been debarred from all such pursuits and ambitions, will not be long in discovering that the investment was one of the best it could have made. We hope, however, that our Canadian universities will throw themselves into the work with higher and more unselfish motives.

TWO other points touched by Dr. Grant in considering the possibilities of Canadian University Extension suggest a word of comment. Let us premise, however, that our present aim is rather to invite discussion than to offer opinions. In the first place, is it necessary to assume, as both Dr. Laflamme and Dr. Grant naturally do, looking at what has been done in England, that the teaching and lecturing in connection with a scheme of University Extension