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THE WEEKLY PRESS.

THE POLITICAL SEASON.
We are getting nearer the political season, and general elections, both Federal and Provincial, seem to be looming up on the horizon. The independent tone has more effect during a campaign than at any other time. The papers which allow themselves to be worked by the politicians always come out of a contest with a net loss in prestige, good humor and circulation. Of course, a publisher who believes in one side will virtually support that side, but his news columns ought to be fair and impartial. His references to prominent party antagonists in the locality should be at least civil, no matter what they say or do. In following this course he may earn the disapprobation of one or two heelers, but in the main his constituency of readers will be pleased. There is no necessity of being wishy-washy. But the day has come when a weekly can afford to adopt a conspicuously

fair tone and at the same time be of great value to the party it supports. The mere organ, the mere hack, the vehicle for all sorts of slush which no individual cares to get on the platform and say, ought to go out of business. Its usefulness is seriously impaired under modern conditions.

THE FREE NOTICE ABUSE.

It is an old proverb that if you grasp a nettle firmly it will not sting you. The free notice abuse has always been a difficult one to correct, because one may give offence to persons who are firm friends of the paper and seldom ask for favors. Mr. Donly of The Simcoe Reformer, touches this delicate question in a perfectly frank but fearless way, and puts the following notice in italic on the front page:

NOTICE.—Hereafter, no reading notices advertising any entertainment or matter by which money is to be made by any person or cause will be inserted in The Reformer without charge, except that when the job work for the same is done at the Reformer printing shop one notice will be given gratis of a size in proportion to the importance of the event. In future, the price for the insertion of business announcements on this page will invariably be 10c per line per insertion. Positively no deviation from this figure except in the case of merchants who make written yearly contracts of 500 lines or upwards.

Probably, in nine cases out of ten, this is the best way to deal with the subject. You cannot be always explaining. Give one man a favor and another expects it. As newspaper space is a matter of money to the publisher, and there are always people ready to eat it up without considering the publisher's financial outlay, a rule of some sort is necessary.

NOT ONLY IN THIS COUNTRY, BUT ELSEWHERE, the possible influence to be exerted by a weekly editor who does his own thinking is under discussion. A writer in a Kansas weekly, devoted to Socialistic ideas, has had in a recent issue some pointed remarks which are worth reproducing exactly as he makes them: "The real power, political and educational, in the United States lies," he says, "in the country press—but it is not the country editor who exercises it. You may think that funny, but I have been there and know whereof I speak. I pulled the lever on an old Washington hand-press for many years, was printer, devil, editor, solicitor—just what the large majority of them are to-day. I said I edited the paper—