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Current Topics.

It is peculiarly unfortunate for Canada that we shall never be able to hear from Sir John Thompson's own report the result of his last interview with the Colonial Secretary on the question of the Copyright Act. If any satisfactory conclusion was reached we shall, of course, be informed in due time. It is highly desirable that the matter should be disposed of without further delay. Delay in such cases is often mischievous, not to say dangerous to good understanding and harmonious working. There are even now some indications of a rising feeling in Canada that the space of four or five years is quite long enough to wait for the enforcement of an Act which was passed by our Parliament with a degree of unanimity seldom reached and which, it can scarcely be doubted, is fairly within our jurisdiction. If there is really any serious doubt on this point why have not steps been promptly taken to obtain a judicial decision? This question of jurisdiction is the main question involved. That of the character of the Act itself is really secondary, and it would be a pity should any compromise in regard to the latter do away with the necessity for having a clear understanding with regard to the former. Mr. J. D. Edgar, in his letter to the London *Times*, has put the Canadian view very clearly, if, perhaps, a little bluntly. If once the British authors and publishers, whose influence with the Government is at the root of the difficulty, could be made to know that the right of Canada to enact its own laws in the case is indisputable, the way would be open for direct communication between those interested parties and the Canadian authorities, with a view to the removal or modification of any clause which can be shown to have in it the element of unfairness, or even of harshness, in respect to their interests. The Canadian Government and Parliament are as amenable as others, it may be hoped, to considerations of right and wrong, but neither they nor the people they represent could consent to have their legis-

ative rights really taken away by the action, not even of the British Parliament, but of the Government. It is pretty clear that some decisive action must be taken during the coming session of Parliament. It is gratifying to learn that there is good reason to believe that the Colonial office is in sympathy with Canada's contention.

The Ottawa Carnival.

Dr. Sanford Fleming, voicing the opinions of many of Ottawa's leading citizens, has addressed an impressive letter to the Mayor of the Capital protesting against the holding of the Carnival on the date originally fixed—21st January. The nation being in mourning, it is certainly an unfortunate time and place for a great public festival, and we are quite unable to see why the Carnival should not, as Dr. Fleming suggests, be postponed until the first week in February.

"It is not easy," writes the distinguished Engineer, "for some of us to understand the important position which Canada has attained in the eyes of the world, but of this some indication may be found in the Imperial honours to the remains of Sir John Thompson in the passage from Windsor to Canada. We cannot set out of view that Ottawa is the seat of Government. This city is peculiarly situated in regard to the death of the late Premier; it is the political capital of the Dominion, and, as such, the residence of the Governor-General and the members of the Ministry. The Colonial Conference held here in June and July last gave to Ottawa high rank in the Empire, and also world-wide distinction. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to have some regard to the position we occupy, and avoid all proceedings which may testify any want of self respect or suggest any absence of that consideration of the public propriety to be observed by every intelligent community. We owe this to our fellow-Canadians as well as to ourselves, for I honestly think that the feeling of respect for Canadians generally will not be enhanced when it comes to be known that the citizens of the Capital, with what many may consider indecent haste, after burying the Premier, hold a week of public rejoicing. . . . I now refer to the matter on broad, national grounds, and I venture to express the opinion that if the week's festival be carried out at the date originally appointed it will be a mistake afterwards to be regretted. The question is not as to the exact number of days which mourning should last. It is, Shall we launch into the opposite of mourning? Shall the Canadian capital precipitate itself into an abnormal condition of gaiety within a few days after the Cabinet Ministers return from the burial of their dead Chief, and by so doing bring discredit on the whole of Canada?"

We are informed that notwithstanding the fact that the Governor General has declined to open the Carnival if held on the 21st, the Committee have advertised it as under his patronage, and that the Parliament and Government buildings will be brilliantly illuminated every night during the week with electrical displays from the towers of the buildings, thus making the Carnival appear as if under the auspices of the Government. There is something very wrong somewhere.

The Future of Newfoundland.

"Hear the other side" is, or should be, emphatically the motto of independent journalism. In obedience to the spirit of that motto we cannot but feel that the view of the situation in Newfoundland presented in a short paragraph in these columns a week or two since, should be supplemented with at least a glimpse of the causes which have led up to the present