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## The Week.

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THE Opposition in the Dominion Parliament have held their preliminary caucus and, it may be presumed, agreed upon their policy, for the Session at least. The details of that policy the public will probably learn only from its developments on the floor of the Commons. One feature, and that evidently a most prominent one, has been already revealed in Sir Richard Cartwright's notice of motion in favour of Unrestricted Reciprocity with the United States. The debate upon this resolution will be followed with interest. A somewhat curious episode in connection with the proposed motion is the request of the Minister of Finance that its discussion be postponed until the protocols of the Washington Fisheries Commission are laid before the House, the request being accompanied with an intimation that the subject of international trade relations was considered before that Commission. It seems scarcely possible, on the one hand, that the Canadian Commissioner could have either proposed or considered any measure of reciprocity involving the admission of the manufactures of the United States, to any considerable extent, into the Dominion free of duty, while, on the other, it was pretty well known that on no other basis would a proposition for the interchange of products be entertained by the United States. The attitude of the Government in relation to Sir Richard Cartwright's motion must of course be consistent with any overtures made by Sir Charles Tupper on their behalf in the Commission. We shall see.

SENATOR GOWAN's proposal to form a Special Committee of the Senate to deal with applications for divorce is certainly, if nothing more, a step in the right direction. There is really nothing to be said in defence of the old system of taking evidence in such delicate matters before a Committee of the whole House. There is a peculiar awkwardness, not to say incongruity, in requiring a grave legislative body to undertake functions which are, in the nature of the case, strictly judicial. Very few in Canada would care to have the standard of strictness in regard to such matters lowered, or to sanction any change in the direction of holding the marriage compact less sacred. But so long as it is agreed that divorce should be granted for the one cause, it is but a matter of simple justice that the remedy should be made as far as possible accessible to the poor as well as to the rich. The expense, delay, and general cumbrousness of the old system are inexcusable. So long as it is held that the work is a proper one for the Senate to perform, it is bound to simplify and cheapen procedure to the

utmost possible limit consistent with thorough inquiry. That a committee of seven could elicit the truth and reach a just verdict much more satisfactorily and expeditiously than the whole House must be obvious. It is, indeed, doubtful whether this will prove a real and permanent solution of the difficulty. Such inquiries belong strictly to the court of justice, and to such a court it will be found necessary, at an early day, to refer them.

THE probability now is that no very strenuous opposition to the ratification of the Fisheries Treaty will be offered in the Canadian Parliament. Whether the Republican faction in the United States Senate will be able to bring about its defeat there remains to be seen. It is possible that Mr. Chamberlain's able speech before the Canadian Club may not be without some effect upon the more thoughtful minds in the party. That speech may be accepted, no doubt, as the best defence of the action of the Commissioners which can be made before a Canadian jury. However it may fail to satisfy Canadians that justice has been done them, or that their rights have been fully secured, it will probably convince most of them that there is now no help for them, and that their wisest course will be to accept the arrangement and make the best of it. At the same time they cannot fail to perceive that the point on which the whole speech turns is the assumption that it was necessary to sacrifice Canadian claims in order to promote peace and good will between the United States and Great Britain. This feature of the negotiations stands out so clearly that it will not be surprising if Canada's acceptance should be accompanied with a strong protest and a demand for permission henceforth to make her own treaties with foreign nations.

THE attempt made by some members of the Board of Separate School Trustees and other Catholics to have the ballot substituted for the open vote in the election of future Boards has called down the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities upon the devoted heads of the offenders. A circular from the Archbishop, which was read in all the Roman Catholic Churches on Sunday, berates these men who have dared to think for themselves, with no sparing hand. His Grace assures the faithful that "Catholic education is essentially a religious affair, to be managed religiously with judgment and economy by the clergy, assisted by good Catholics." To the argument that as the laity supply the funds they should have the spending of the money, his Grace makes the rejoinder that this is precisely what these men want, as "they would then have opportunities on the school boards to help their friends and indirectly themselves by contracts,"—an imputation of dishonest motives which seems scarcely in accord with common notions of archiepiscopal dignity, to say nothing of Christian charity. The public interest in the controversy arises mainly from the opportunity it affords of studying the Catholic idea and use of the educational machinery which our Constitution unfortunately puts in their hands, to be operated largely at the public expense. The public money is devoted to the making not of good citizens but of good Catholics, men whose first allegiance is due not to Canada but to Rome.

AFTER much delay the debate of the Session—that upon the Quebec Resolutions—has been opened in the Ontario Legislature. It is to be regretted, though it was perhaps inevitable, that the various speakers should have at once ranged themselves in accordance with strict party lines. Discussion of the questions raised upon their merits is thereby made impossible. But however desirable or necessary may be certain amendments of the Constitution, in the directions indicated by the main resolutions, the changes proposed in those resolutions are so obviously directed against courses of procedure which have been taken at different times by Governments led by the present Dominion Premier that his friends and admirers feel called upon to defend him against the strong censure which would be implied in the passage of the resolutions. It is no doubt true, as intimated by Mr. Mowat, that the prerogative of veto, against which the resolutions are specially directed, was freely, if not arbitrarily, used by the Administration led by Mr. Mackenzie, but this break in the otherwise continuous reign of the present Dominion Premier occurred so long since, and was so brief in comparison with the whole period that it is almost forgotten in the general review. The same party