

THE WEEK.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 9th, 1891.

\$3.00 per Annum.
Single Copies 10 Cents.

Eighth Year.
Vol. VIII., No. 6.

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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Subscribers in Great Britain and Ireland supplied, postage prepaid, on terms following:—One year, 12s. 6d.; half-year, 6s. 6d. Remittances by P.O. order or draft should be made payable and addressed to the Publisher.
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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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

It is noteworthy that in the discussions which have been rife of late touching civic affairs, the press and people, of all shades of politics, have been in unusual accord on one point. All unite in condemning the ward system. To it the major part of the weaknesses and failures so conspicuous in the councils of our cities and large towns are freely attributed. The ward politician, the civic councillor who regards it as his special duty to his constituents to secure the largest possible appropriations of the city funds within the special ward he represents, is, it is agreed, the natural outcome of this system. Does it never occur to those who reason so wisely and so well, that the principle which is leading them to condemn this system and seek a better is capable of wider application? It is precisely the same system, save that the electoral periods are in the latter case much farther apart, which obtains in Provincial and Dominion politics. Nor are the results one whit less baneful in the larger spheres. What else is it that makes possible the wholesale bribery of constituencies, of which we hear so much complaint? The Quebec Premier, in a recent speech in the Legislature, is said to have frankly admitted that he uses the promise of railways, bridges, roads, etc., as a means of making himself and his Government popular in the constituencies at election times, and to have seemed surprised that anyone could see anything wrong in his so doing. The Dominion Opposition declare loudly that the recent elections in Napierville and South Victoria were won by such tactics. A bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Nova Scotia, in the famous letter which has lately been given to the public, strenuously urges the same plea as an unanswerable argument in favour of the re-election of the minister of his choice, and his ecclesiastical superior approves the argument as legitimate. No one, we suppose, at least no political opponent, doubts that the long continuance in power of the present Ontario Government is due largely to the skilful use of the same tactics, with, perhaps, modified applications. The wonder is that the essential injustice and immorality of such methods do not impress themselves upon the minds of the people in their wider, as well as in their narrower, application. If it is dishonest and degrading for a ward councillor to seek to obtain for those

whom he represents more than their fair share of the civic funds, it is surely no less dishonest and degrading for a minister of the Crown, or a member of Parliament, to do the same thing for a constituency. Unquestionably the moment either minister or candidate intimates that a given constituency will stand a better chance of getting an appropriation for some local enterprise—whether deserving or not is immaterial—if the Government candidate is placed at the head of the poll, that moment he admits that the Government is not a strictly honest, impartial administration. It is surely unnecessary to argue the point, or to show that the political complexion of the member elected should not have the slightest effect in determining the Government policy in relation to any proposed expenditure of the public money. Why then are not electors all over the Dominion setting their faces against the ward system in politics, and trying to devise some plan for reforming or abolishing it?

THE Minister of Education took occasion at the general educational meeting to give the High School masters some excellent advice. They are, he said, sometimes in danger of forgetting that it is not the chief work of the High Schools to prepare students for matriculation and for the teaching profession. They should remember that only two per cent. of their pupils matriculate at universities, that the greater number of them do not enter the higher professions, that the solid education of the many is the chief thing to be desired. It is encouraging to hear Mr. Ross speaking in this fashion. We have on former occasions ventured to point out that the Minister's desire to unify the whole system of public education, from Kindergarten to university, has tended to favour a method of teaching the very opposite of that he now recommends. No such close correlation of the various grades of schools can be attained save at large sacrifice of the efficiency of the individual schools. So long as the work done in any school is shaped, in a large degree, with a view to meeting the requirements of some higher institution, its individuality is sapped, and the best results in its teaching become impossible. Did it not occur to the Minister that, as things have been hitherto, the High School master who should follow his advice, and throw the candidates for the university and other examinations largely on their own resources while giving his strength and that of his staff to the solid education of the many, would be simply committing professional suicide. We do not undertake to say who is to blame, but the Minister can hardly fail to be aware that the eyes of all, parents included, have been fixed upon the examinations. By the results of these the standing of the school has been judged. The head master who should fail to "pass" the proper proportion of his candidates would soon find it necessary to seek another situation or leave the profession. "Cramming" is the inevitable result of teaching with a view to the examinations of another institution, or of outside examiners. Now that the Senate of the Provincial University has accepted the Leaving Examinations in lieu of its own matriculation tests, the Minister will have an opportunity to have these examinations so conducted that they may become a help rather than a hindrance to the teachers in following his advice in their class-rooms. Let him see to it that the daily work of the students during term is taken into the account, as well as their answers to questions prepared by the examiners. As a rule the head master and teachers of a school can better determine the relative merits of one of their classes, from their personal knowledge and their note-books, than the most skilful examiners from a single examination. Hence there is a good deal to be said in favour of the action of the youngest of the universities, in accepting the certificate of the head master of a High School or Collegiate Institute in lieu of a matriculation examination. The Senate of the Provincial University has, however, done well to accept the Leaving Examination as a test of fitness for matriculation. No doubt the other universities will do the same. The guarantee of fitness will be equally good, if the examinations are what they should be, and evidence of fitness to enter upon their work is all the universities really need. The result will be a simplification of the educational machinery, and a saving of time and energy for real educational work.

ENTHUSIASM, restrained and directed, is becoming more and more, under present-day conditions, a *sine qua non* of professional success. The meetings of the various educational associations, held in this city during the holidays, evinced in a very pleasing manner that this quality exists in large degree amongst those engaged in the work of secondary education in Ontario. If, occasionally, there was manifest at these meetings some tendency towards too much discursive talk, at other times the practical directness of the papers and discussions was all that could be desired. When, for instance, Professor Alexander pointed out the important changes in the English curriculum of the University of Toronto, he called attention to one of the best of the many improvements which have of late years been made in the courses and methods of that institution. When, on the other hand, he deprecated the inadequate provision made for practice in English composition, or essay-writing, he put his finger upon what is unquestionably one of the weakest spots in the educational work of the University. Why is it, one is sometimes tempted to ask, that an institution with so able a staff of professors and so large and clever a body of students brings forth so little immediate fruit in the shape of literary productions? The answer that would be given by competent educators familiar with the facts would probably be two-fold. They would tell us first, as Professor Alexander has done, that the curriculum makes no adequate provision for that constant and vigorous practice in original composition which is an indispensable condition of success; and, secondly, that the time of the students is so fully occupied in preparing by means of text-books and lectures for coming examinations that they have no time for independent thinking, still less for carefully putting their thoughts on paper. The simple remedy proposed by Messrs. Alexander and Vandersmissen, to lessen the tendency to cramming by counting in the term-work in determining standings and honours, would go far to remedy this and other very serious defects. In connection with this subject the excellent suggestions made by Principal Huston, of Woodstock, touching the need of more attention being given to the cultivation of the conversational powers, and of correctness and ease in their use, are well worth the attention of teachers of all grades. The discussion in the Science Association directed attention to a most serious defect in the public schools, in the almost utter absence of any efficient instruction in elementary science. It can hardly be doubted that the elements of many branches of science could be studied with profit and delight by the more advanced boys and girls in the public schools, and few who have paid any attention to the subject doubt that both educationally and practically these subjects are of the highest value, developing as they do the faculties which are most intimately related to all industrial pursuits, and opening up avenues of research that may be followed with profit and delight through all the future life.

THE retirement of Sir Joseph Hickson from the position which he has so long and ably filled as General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway is an event of no little importance, and demands more than a passing notice. In these days of railway consolidation and extension, the position of manager of a great railway corporation demands a combination of qualities not often found in a single individual. Great railroad managers are, in fact, almost as rare as great generals. Hence, when after a long period of successful service in such a position, one is able to retire, as Sir Joseph Hickson has now done, with the regret of all interested in the road, and the respect of the entire community, it may be pretty safely assumed that he has shown himself possessed not only of mental abilities, but of other sterling qualities of character, of no common order. Mr. Hickson entered the service of the Grand Trunk Company as chief accountant in 1861, almost thirty years ago. He was soon after appointed Secretary and Treasurer, and for ten or twelve years efficiently performed the arduous duties of this dual office. On the retirement of the late Mr. C. J. Brydges in 1874, Mr. Hickson was appointed to the high position which he has just now voluntarily resigned. Of the great progress and development of the line, or rather congeries of lines, under his management it is unnecessary to dwell. Suffice it to say