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## THE WEEK:

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### CURRENT TOPICS.

It was a relief to learn of the end of the desultory and sometimes bloody struggle between the warring factions in Brazil, whether the result accords exactly with one's sympathies or not. In so far as the revolt of the insurgents seemed to be directed against the assumption of arbitrary power by the President, those who have faith in government of the people, by the people, for the people, would naturally sympathize with the rebel admiral, i.e., if they could persuade themselves that his success would mean the triumph of self-government, not the restoration of a deposed monarch. On the other hand, the many who might be inclined to suspect the good faith of the insurgent leaders and to foresee in their triumph the evils of a military despotism, even more

to be dreaded than those of a hereditary or dynastic one, would be glad to learn of the victory of Peixoto. In either case it is satisfactory to know that, as a new President has already been elected, the result of the Government's victory can hardly be disastrous to the liberties of the people, while the restoration of peace and the resumption of trade will be a distinct benefit to other nations as well as to that which has so long suffered the dire effects of prolonged civil war.

The motions and debates in the Ontario Legislature this session are an interesting study for the student of party politics. They afford a striking object-lesson on the tendency of a long term in office to transform so-called Liberal administrations into Conservatives and the tendency of a long term in Opposition to transform Conservatives into Liberals. It is extremely interesting, not to say edifying, to see the leader of the Conservative Opposition and his lieutenants bombarding the Government benches with speeches and resolutions of the most pronounced Radical type, and the leader of the Liberal Administration, with the help of his colleagues and supporters, defending themselves with arguments of distinctly Conservative character. Take, for instance, the debate last week on the motion made and vigorously supported by the Opposition leaders in favour of the abolition of fees and the election or appointment by municipal authorities of all officials whose remuneration is provided in whole or in part by the localities for which they are appointed. What could have a more pronounced Radical hue than such a motion? And what could be more distinctly Conservative than the defence of the present fee system, with its concomitants of Government patronage and the power of occasionally rewarding one of the faithful with a very lucrative position, by the Government. Happily the question at issue is not of sufficient practical importance to prevent one from enjoying the humour of the situation.

The question of tariff-revision so completely overshadows every other mentioned in the Speech from the Ottawa throne, that it is difficult to give due consideration to any other until this is disposed of. Whether blameworthy or not in the matter of calling Parliament together at so late a date, the Government will deserve great credit if it adheres to its promise, as made by Sir John Thompson, to bring down the budget

within a very few days. If they are able to adhere to that programme, and to have the tariff question definitely settled, even after two or three weeks' debate, the superiority of our legislative system over that of our cousins in the United States will have been once more strikingly demonstrated. Any conjectures with regard to the nature and extent of the changes to be proposed would be idle. That the terms of the Premier's speech were re-assuring to the friends of radical reform cannot be affirmed. They pointed rather in the opposite direction. But we shall soon know the best or worst, as the case may be. That determined opposition and long debate await the Government proposals, whatever they may be, is, of course, certain, because the battle is not only between the "Ins" and the "Outs," but because the forthcoming scheme is to be based strictly, we are told, upon protectionist principles, while "Free Trade" is the largest plank in the Opposition platform. But it is to be hoped that both parties will prove sufficiently patriotic, not to say philanthropic, to remember that the eyes of the unemployed are fixed hungrily upon them from all parts of the Dominion, and that the whole people are awaiting their verdict with intense anxiety.

Even in New York the planners and perpetrators of electoral frauds seem to have fallen on evil times. No less than thirty-nine have been convicted and sentenced in that city for frauds committed in connection with the late elections. The *Nation* says: "There have been frauds on a considerable scale at every election for a quarter of a century, but never before have thirty-nine of the cheats been indicted, convicted, and sentenced." Of this number one "district leader," "Paddy" Divver, was responsible for eighteen, and another, "Barney" Martin, for nine. Both these men were police magistrates. The first-named had been recommended for that office by a President of the Board of Education and an eminent criminal judge, under the name and style of "The Hon. Patrick Divvey." The Hon. Patrick had stimulated the frauds by offering prizes for those who would roll up the heaviest majorities in their districts. The first prize was to be a \$1,500 situation, which the winner could keep or give to a friend. It is not surprising that when Paddy and his friends heard that the Grand Jury were looking into the matter, either his business or the state of his health suddenly demanded his presence in California. The investigation which led