

## The Week.

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In an answer to the Government Memorandum on Riel, Mr. Girouard has formulated the complaint of his French-Canadian compatriots; and, we cannot but think, a weaker case was never presented for public judgment. His contention is, in substance, that a criminal, in order to save himself from due punishment, has only, when no other loophole of escape remains open, to offer to submit to justice; that when a jury recommends to mercy, this recommendation, as part of the verdict, must not be set aside; that the Indian massacres, being legitimate from the point of view of the Indians, we must, to estimate the degree of their guilt, descend to their level of civilization; that Riel and the insurgents did not commit high treason, but were guilty at the most of a riot when they took up arms, as is proved by their design to capture General Middleton, and hold him as a hostage to assist them in making better terms with the Government; and, finally, that the man who organized the rebellion, carried it on for months, and wrote its history, was insane. To any candid mind these propositions carry their own refutation. But there is one argument advanced by Mr. Girouard about which there may be some difference of opinion. It is that an official enquiry, not a confidential one, should have been made by Government into Riel's alleged insanity. But we all know what this would have resulted in. Both sides would have been represented on the Commission, contrary opinions would have been expressed, and each opinion would have been as valueless as the other. To any one whose judgment may be at any time disturbed as to the criminality of the accused in such cases, we commend the following excerpt from an article by Baron Bramwell in the *Nineteenth Century* for December:—

"It is said and contended that medical men, especially those who have experience in dealing with insane persons, have a special right to give opinions when a question of insanity is raised; that it is a question for experts, and that they are experts. I wholly deny it. I have heard Lord Campbell, the Chief Justice, say the same, and object to a question, 'Was the man sane?' saying that is for the jury to answer. Insanity is no more a question for an expert than lameness. Is the man lame? is he mad? are equally questions of fact, to be judged of as a matter of fact. . . . If the man walks lame, I could not help thinking so, even if a Paget said he was not; it would in such a case turn out that we saw differently, or meant different things by lameness. There may be a corresponding difference as to insanity. But it is not for the medical man to lay down the law on this subject, and say what is madness. I will not pretend to say or define what is; nor would I lameness. But I say it is a question for ordinary persons, and not for experts; and so is the question whether it exists in any particular case."

In an interview lately had by a *Herald* reporter with Mr. Brydges, Hudson's Bay Land Commissioner, the fact came out that although the crop in Manitoba has been a good one, "a certain amount has been damaged by early frost. At least one-half of the crop will turn out first-class; but the balance is slightly frosted." If we mistake not, this is the third season in succession that early frosts have done damage to the crops there. Manitoba is going through the experience of Ontario in the early days of settlement, when similar destruction of the crops by frost was of frequent occurrence. The sturdy pioneers here soon learned, however, by experience the proper time to sow and the best kinds of seed to use; but in Manitoba the farmers now are at the disadvantage of either having to go beyond this knowledge by finding out a hard wheat like "Red Fyfe" that will ripen earlier than that; or to take to a softer kind like "Golden Drop," that has the desirable quality of ripening earlier, but that sells at a lower price. In this connexion it is as well to observe that the price of wheat in Manitoba ranges from 63 to 67 cents; butter 8 to 10 cents; live cattle 3 to 3½ cents—prices which do not appear to leave much margin for diminution, even if mixed farming be more generally adopted. In view of the uncertainties of the situation, it would seem scarcely wise for Ontario farmers to remove just now to Manitoba in the expectation of bettering their condition.

To judge from the reason given for the appointment of Mr. George E. Foster as Minister of Marine and Fisheries—"because he belongs to the Baptist denomination, which from its numerical strength in the Dominion is entitled to one representative in the Cabinet"—judging from this, the

members of the Government are selected not on account of their fitness for office but as representatives of religious bodies. This is a new method of welding together Church and State; and if it goes on we shall soon have the edifying spectacle of a Ministry of the Crown composed of ministers of the gospel. But the present appointment appears to be double-edged. It is apparently designed to attach not only a religious society to the Government but also a moral one. Sir John seemingly thinks some of his colleagues or their constituents may be accused of taking their water a little too weak; and he therefore makes all right in the eyes of the righteous by a recruit from the temperance platform. Not men of brains and capacity are needed to carry on the Government, but delegates from classes that control votes.

THE first Message of President Cleveland is interesting as the first official utterance of the chief of a party that has been out of office for over a quarter of a century. Since the last representative of that party held the Presidential office the country has gone through a great war, and a new fiscal policy, designed originally to provide for the extraordinary expenditures incurred by that war, has grown into a thoroughly rooted system of Protection. How immovably fixed it has become may be seen by the tenderness with which the President, head of the party opposed to it by tradition, now touches it. Although the revenues of the Government are in excess of its actual needs, he does not recommend that the Protective system which produced that result be abandoned. On the contrary, he recognizes that the large protected vested interests—the huge monopolies—must not be disturbed, adding, rather curiously, that the question of Free Trade is not involved in the amount of excess of taxation raised, and deprecating any general discussion of the wisdom or expediency of a Protective system. This surely is a remarkable utterance. It looks very much as if the President were not unwilling to relax a little in principle, for the sake of other considerations. No doubt any sudden change, or project of change, in the fiscal policy of the country would greatly disturb trade; but surely the nation is not committed immovably to Protection; and if it be intended at all to set sail in a different direction, this would seem to be a fit time, with the favouring circumstance of a Free Trade ship's company aboard to do it. But, however, it must be remembered that a President's Message to Congress is not of the authoritative nature of the Queen's Speech to Parliament. The Message is suggestive merely; and as the Executive, whose programme it is, stands outside the Legislature, and has, therefore, no part in its discussion, Congress has acquired the habit of wholly ignoring its recommendations.

BOUND up as Canada is by such close commercial ties with the Union, any indication of a change in its fiscal policy would be of importance to us, who, following in our huge neighbour's wake, have but recently drifted into the sea of Protection. For it is clear that if the States should adopt a policy of Free Trade, or readjust their tariff for revenue purposes only, Canada had best do so likewise; and if the President had shown a tendency to push Free Trade to the front, it might be felt that a step was gained toward a closer commercial union between the two peoples. But in fact his utterance, although cautious and non-committal, must, considering his circumstances, be taken as a decided set-back to Free Trade, and therefore a discouragement to Commercial Union. For we take it that while by the high-protective system the cost of manufactures is so enhanced that they are normally shut out from all foreign markets, it would be unwise for Canada to unbar her door and let them in. A chief result of Protection is to produce a local glut of commodities; to dispose of the surplus part of which, in order that the price of the rest may be maintained, a sacrifice market is, in the absence of a legitimate foreign market, highly desirable. And such a sacrifice market would Canada become. The American manufacturer for fifty-five million home-consumers can well afford to supply four or five million other consumers with commodities at even below cost, if by so doing he can relieve the home market and so maintain prices. For it is the presence or absence of this surplus, perhaps inconsiderable in quantity, that regulates the price of the whole. But what would relieve the American manufacturer would ruin the Canadian. With foreign goods selling below cost, however much the consumer might profit—and to profit at all he must be in no way concerned in producing similar commodities—the Canadian manufacturer, with his whole staff of labour, would have nothing left for it but to emigrate.

Now that an agreement with France respecting the Newfoundland fisheries has been arrived at by England, as is reported to be the case, it is to be hoped that a lasting settlement of the similar question between Canada and the States may be concluded. The President's recommenda-