

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

**Newfoundland and Confederation.**

Should the announcement that the Newfoundland Legislature has definitely rejected the financial conditions of union proposed by the Canadian Government, the fact will be regrettable, but no one can blame the Canadian Government for not permitting the Island to come in with a higher rate of indebtedness than fifty dollars per head of population. The time has come when it is absolutely necessary to the progress and even to the safety of the Confederation that a check be put upon the rate of increase of the public debt. It is extremely doubtful whether the Government could have carried a proposal involving more liberal terms in the present House; it is almost certain that such a proposal would not have been approved at the polls.

**Behring Sea Matters.**

Some little sensation has been caused by the announcement that Great Britain has refused to continue on her part the sealing of arms on board of vessels engaged in taking seals in the limits within which the use of fire-arms is prohibited by the Paris agreement. The report, if true, can have no significance save that the British Government are not satisfied with the working of that plan, which was merely one of mutual agreement for last season. Of course the discontinuance of this agreement will deprive the American cutters of the right to seal the arms on British vessels. It is clear that Great Britain cannot refuse to carry out any of the provisions of the treaty, because the United States have not paid the indemnity to Canadian vessel-owners agreed on between the two Governments, as the United States has a perfect right to prefer leaving the question of damages to be settled by arbitration, the alternative agreed on. Our cousins are unquestionably disappointed with the effects of the treaty provisions, as tried by last year's experience, but it is also true that the other party loyally submitted when it was supposed by many that the treaty arrangement would be destructive of the business of Canadian sealers. However, neither Great Britain nor Canada, any more than the United States, desires the extermination of the seals and the destruction of a profitable industry, and if it can be clearly shown that this will be the inevitable effect of the present regulations, they will, no doubt, consent to such further friendly and reasonable restrictions as may be found necessary.

**Mr. Mills' Political Primer.**

Mr. Mills, of Bothwell, it is understood, since the debate on Dr. Bourinot's letter to Lieutenant-Governor Schultz, is busily engaged in preparing an index expurgatorious for the use of Lieutenant-Governors in their constitutional relations with their ministers and for their general guidance in all matters of Government. It is said that he lays down with much skill the rules and principles which should prevent what is so very objectionable in his opinion—any independent exercise of thought or judgment on the part of the heads of the executive. One of the ministers, he suggests, should be specially authorized to furnish these functionaries from day to day with newspapers from which all objectionable passages are carefully eliminated and *proper* articles duly marked for their reading. They will also from time to time receive a list of those books and essays which they should read, with such comments and notes as the ministers alone may think necessary. Mr. Mills is also considering whether he will not advise a series of lectures by ministers for the purpose of teaching the Lieutenant-Governors that they should have no opinions of their own, but depend upon their advisers alone for information on the topics of the day. It will be seen that, briefly summed up, Mr. Mills' object is to make a Lieutenant-Governor a sort of *petty* juryman who is not to have an opinion or to inform himself on a subject that he may be called upon to consider and decide as head of the executive. No doubt this learned gentleman will greatly add to the usefulness and intelligence of the Lieutenant-Governors, and at the same time give us unquestionable evidence of his liberality of thought in matters of political science.

**What is University Extension.**

*The Citizen*, the organ of University Extension in the United States, is at some pains to defend the work it represents from the charge brought against it by General Wistar. The latter, in a published letter, describes the University Extension Movement as an error "in the direction of diffusiveness and superficiality." There is something almost amusing in the anxious solicitude so often expressed by university men and others lest some of those who cannot manage to take a full university course should succeed in getting some substitute, some kind of a course or training in an inferior institution, which they or other ignorant persons may confuse with the genuine article. To hear some of these sticklers for thoroughness or nothing talk, one might be led to suppose that education or brain culture, instead of being a process infinite in extent and variety, and shading all the way up from the most rudimentary work of the elementary schools, or even from the development which every active mind would be sure to receive even though its possessor never crossed the threshold of a school of any grade, to the highest acquirements of the most profound student and philosopher, is some mysterious mental specific, manufactured only by some duly authorized institution which can be relied on to turn out the genuine article, and which is in constant danger of being discredited by cheap imitations. The impression conveyed is that, as in the case of other imitations, the genuine article alone is worth having, and the counterfeit not only useless, but even positively injurious, if not dangerous. Is it not