

THE WEEK.

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The Week,

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE scene in the Ontario House of Legislature on Monday night was as painful as it is likely to be memorable. In the lobbies and galleries, before the sitting, there was considerable talk, of a more or less facetious character, about an expected "explosion," which was to make St. Patrick's Day of 1884 notable in the history of Canada. The building itself was doubly guarded against the hidden enemy, and the presence inside of persons whose semi-ubiquity and watchfulness proclaimed their calling, gave colour to the alarmist speculations. The rumour that some person had been arrested was considered confirmation strong as Holy Writ of a projected dynamite outrage. But when Mr. Mowat rose and announced that a conspiracy to purchase the votes of members of that House had been discovered, and that proofs of the charge were in the Speaker's hands, it was felt that was an "explosion" of an infinitely more damaging nature to the House than any Fenian attack could have been. When the Speaker, in response, produced letters confirming the Premier's statement, and counted out bills to the value of almost two thousand dollars, which it was alleged were actually paid over to two members then present in the House, a profound sensation was made. Up to this point the Government had contented themselves with a bare statement of the facts, without unnecessary comment, but the ill-judged remarks of Mr. Meredith and Mr. Morris provoked a scathing retort from Mr. Fraser, which gave the Liberal side of the House an opportunity to relieve its pent-up feelings in thunderous applause, and the House soon after adjourned, after one of the most painful scenes ever witnessed within its walls.

SIGNIFICANT references are freely made in public places to the attitude of the public press in connection with the frequent railway accidents which it has had occasion to chronicle of late. No editorial comment has been made by the leading dailies, for instance, upon the succession of serious disasters which have happened this year at various points of the Grand Trunk railway, notably at that fatal spot known as "the Humber," near Toronto. A perfect holocaust has been offered at that baleful spot alone, not to mention minor "accidents," attended by loss of life in other parts of the system. Railway travelling, now become an absolute necessity of existence to commercial men, might be, and ought to be, conducted with

comparative safety—at any rate, with a minimum of loss of life and property—whereas it is becoming a thing to be dreaded, through the crass carelessness and callousness of monopoly and greed.

THE *Bobcaygeon Independent* has a clever article on the policy of centralization which is in course of development at Ottawa. The apostle of this creed is, of course, Sir John Macdonald, whilst our contemporary looks upon Mr. Mowat as the champion of segregation:

The Conservatives are seeking to unite the various scattered Provinces into one great Confederation. To accomplish this end they are striving to wipe out Provincialism, to merge all political power in a central Government, and to extinguish what are known as "Provincial Rights." The means used to accomplish the object in view are various, but the one most prominent is the building of railways connecting together the long line of Provinces which extend across the Continent. These views of the Conservative and National Policy party are sustained by arguments which at once appeal to the national vanity, and the public speeches are inflated with such phrases as "great country," "great people," "from the Atlantic to the Pacific," and innuendoes touching the probability of the Great Dominion overshadowing or even absorbing the United States.

The *Independent* then proceeds to show how Ontario would be the most serious loser if the centralizing process were developed. "It would absorb everything of value to Ontario. Ontario prosperity would be made a partner with Quebec bankruptcy; while the Government of the whole country would be controlled by the Quebec French vote."

Already the Confederate Government has struck some heavy blows against Ontario's Provincial Rights. It has refused to ratify the Boundary Award, it has vetoed the Streams Bill, it has usurped the power to regulate the liquor traffic, and it has taken from the people of Ontario the right to control the railways they have built with their own Ontario money and Ontario enterprise.

Our contemporary thinks the people of Ontario are willing to make any reasonable sacrifice for the sake of strengthening Federal Union, but advises them to sternly resist further encroachments on provincial rights.

THERE were thirty-eight failures in Canada reported to Bradstreet's last week, against forty-three the preceding week and forty-two, five, and seventeen the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, 1881, respectively. There were also one hundred and eighty-six failures in the United States reported to Bradstreet's during the past week as compared with two hundred and thirty-three, one hundred and forty, and one hundred and thirty-three, in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, 1881. About eighty-four per cent. were those of trade's whose capital was less than \$5,000.

THE *Chicago Current* feels compelled to observe that, as far as America is concerned, public opinion has by no means arrived at unanimity as to the propriety or the favourable effect of the co-education of the sexes at colleges or universities. The increase of colleges for women exclusively, in our country is evidence that separate education is generally preferred. At Cornell University, which has been open to women for twelve or fifteen years, with every inducement which the higher education can offer, there are not over forty or fifty female students. At other colleges, or "universities," as many of them are erroneously called, where co-education obtains, there is no enthusiastic rush of young women, and the majority of prudent parents in the United States are averse to sending their daughters to such institutions, having an old-fashioned prejudice against the current effort to force woman, by a kind of sexual revolution, into lines of action and association alien to her nature. There are certain potent reasons, resting on a deep substratum of delicacy and natural refinement and conviction of the fitness of things, why young men and young women should receive the higher education separately, and while the champions of the system are very positive in their asseverations of a resultant mental improvement from consociation, the proof is far from being attainable.

THE rumour that Mr. Gladstone is about to dissolve Parliament will probably turn out to be baseless. He could not hope to increase his following by such a course, nor does he need a better working majority. "Pared down to the quick," he can count upon half-a-hundred votes. To say that he fears "obstruction," and so would have a new House, is nonsense. The *cloture* is quite capable for irreconcilables, of which he would have more if he went to the country now, for Ireland would send a stronger contingent. If the House of Lords throws out the Franchise Bill, as it probably may, then an appeal to the constituencies would have a show of reason.