

# THE WEEK.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 7th, 1889.

\$3.00 per Annum  
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

Sixth Year.  
Vol. VI. No. 27.

## THE WEEK :

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS LITERATURE SCIENCE AND ARTS

TERMS:—One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.00  
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No advertisements charged less than five lines. Address—T. R. CLOUGHIER, 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.

WHETHER agreeing or otherwise with the specific changes proposed by Dr. Grant, everyone who takes an intelligent interest in the progress of higher education in Ontario must feel that the Principal of Queen's is doing good service in bringing the important educational questions with which he deals in his recent address, into the arena of public discussion. No one can doubt that "the union and harmony of all our educational forces," for which he pleads, is necessary in order to secure the best possible results for the whole country. That such union and harmony do not at present exist is but too evident. The independent universities, having adopted the standard of matriculation prescribed by the Provincial University, are as Dr. Grant says, and as we pointed out in the article in our last number, "at its mercy." Does not then the simplest courtesy, to say nothing of other and higher considerations, suggest that the representatives of these institutions should be consulted in regard to both subjects and methods of examination? Nor is there any reason to doubt that this co-operation would be helpful in every respect. However able and distinguished, the members of the Senate and Faculty of the University of Toronto can scarcely claim a monopoly of the educational wisdom of the Province. We venture to say that very few competent educators anywhere can be found to approve so low a minimum as twenty-five per cent. for admission to a University, no matter what the range of subjects or the severity of examiners. Some sapient and courteous critic has counselled Principal Grant and his supporters to "mind their own business." His rejoinder that that is just what they are doing in looking after the interests of their own University is effective. Principal Grant might, indeed, have gone further. Seeing that the University of Toronto belongs to the whole people, every tax-paying citizen has a right to some ample guarantee that its courses and methods of instruction shall be the best possible. Those who choose, in addition to bearing their share of the Provincial burden, to contribute voluntarily for the support

of other institutions, forfeit thereby none of their rights in connection with that which is the property of all. They have, it might almost be said, acquired a double interest in its proceedings. We are glad to learn that the Council of Queen's is to appeal directly to the Minister of Education. His response will be anxiously awaited.

PRINCIPAL GRANT, despairing of any concerted action on the part of the universities to improve the standard of matriculation, has come to the conclusion that the plan advocated by Professor Dupuis and others should be pressed. That plan is to substitute for the present July matriculation examinations a "leaving" or final examination for High Schools and Collegiate Institutes. Without committing ourselves to unqualified approval of an innovation which needs fuller discussion, we can see much to be said in its favour. There could be no serious difficulty in making such an examination at least as reliable a test of the fitness of the candidate to enter the classes of a University, as the method now in vogue affords. In the hands of such a Board of representative educators as Dr. Grant suggests, it should easily be made a much more efficient test. From the point of view of the High Schools themselves, there is a good deal to be said in favour of a proposal which would add so materially to the inducements held out to pupils to complete the course in those institutions. So far as it would conduce to this end the method would accord with a sound educational principle. The Minister of Education has on several occasions dwelt on the careful dovetailing of the different parts of the school system into each other,—public school into high school, and high school into university,—as an exceptional merit of the system. It certainly has its advantage for the student who wishes to go forward to a degree, or even to the end of the high school course. But the arrangement has also its danger. It may be doubted whether such an adjustment of courses is possible without grave detriment to the value of each course, in itself considered. Probably the larger number of pupils in the public schools are obliged to content themselves with the training therein acquired, without proceeding to the high school. It is obvious, on reflection, that the regime which is best fitted to prepare a pupil for the entrance examination is not the one best fitted to prepare for the duties of active life the boy or girl who is to have no further educational opportunity. The same remark holds touching the relation of High School or Collegiate Institute to University. But if this be admitted, it follows that it might be made greatly to the advantage of the larger number, were the work of each class of schools shaped more with reference to the fulness and symmetry of its own course, and less with reference to the requirements of the next higher institution. It does not follow that the work must necessarily be less efficient as a preparation for the higher course.

THE brief press reports of the course of lectures delivered by Dr. Bourinot before Trinity University must have whetted the public appetite for more. Discussions of Canadian constitutional questions by competent and dispassionate authorities are just now greatly needed, and it may be hoped that either the learned author or the University may give these to the public in some easily procurable form. The temptation is great in a young community to be impatient of constitutional methods and restraints, and, upon exciting occasions, to make considerations of expediency and even of abstract political right yield to the impulses of the majority. But all history shows that the fullest liberty and the completest self-rule in a community are possible only on condition of the subjection of popular impulse to broad political principles, and self-imposed constitutional restraints. It is pretty certain that the strain of a twenty-one-years' trial has revealed defects in the Canadian constitution. It is quite possible that one of these defects may be the want of a more specific and practical method of revision, with a view to the removal of such defects. But that constitution is, nevertheless, the outcome of the best political wisdom of the country at the time of its adoption, and the Anglo-Saxon genius for self-government forbids that it should be hastily set aside, or even strained for the accomplishment of any temporary end, however desirable that end may

appear in the eyes of a majority whose views and convictions may have been outraged. Revision may be desirable and necessary but it should be made deliberately and independently of temporary excitements.

IN illustration of our meaning we may refer to a point made in Dr. Bourinot's last lecture. Touching on the question of provincial autonomy he is reported as follows:

"The weight of authority now seems to rest with those who have always contended that in entering into the federal compact the Provinces never renounced their distinct existence as 'political entities.' This separate existence was expressly reserved for all that concerns their internal Government; and in forming themselves into a federation, under political and legislative aspects, they established a central Government for inter-provincial objects only. Far from the federal authority having created the Provincial powers, it is from these powers that there has actually arisen the federal Government to which the Provinces ceded a portion of their rights, property and revenues for general purposes."

This is precisely the view we have hitherto maintained. And it is one which cannot be too strongly pressed upon the attention of the people, at the present crisis, if they think the Confederation worth preserving. In one of a series of very able articles upon the Jesuits' Estates question the *Mail*, following Senator Trudel, contends that Quebec rejected legislative union and insisted on a federal union of the Provinces "because she had a world of social, religious and national interests peculiarly her own which she could not think of entrusting to a majority differing from her in race, creed, language, customs, manners, and ideals," and represents the English delegates as yielding to her pressure. Now the position of Quebec was undoubtedly as stated, but the *Mail* must know, if it will cudgel its memory, or look up the history of the matter, that every other of the Provinces originally federating took the same position, not under Quebec's pressure, but for reasons of its own. Sir John Macdonald and possibly a few others had no doubt individual preferences for a legislative union. But they quickly found it out of the question. The Maritime Provinces would have been not a whit less inexorably opposed to such a surrender of provincial autonomy than Quebec. And the same may be said of Ontario. So, too, the *Mail's* argument drawn from the theory that the Provinces derive in part their revenues from Dominion subsidies fails in view of the fact, which the Provinces will not soon forget, that the Dominion's Exchequer was and is supplied only by the surrender on the part of the Provinces of their individual sources of revenue. In receiving subsidies they but receive back a part of their own. It seems impossible, then, to deny that the principle of Provincial autonomy is too firmly embedded in the Canadian constitution to be removed without such a disruption of the whole fabric as would almost certainly leave no possibility of reconstruction.

HAS the Post-Office Department of the Dominion Government a legalized monopoly of the business of letter delivery in the cities and towns of the Dominion? And, if so, is the enforcement of such a monopoly compatible with the rights of the subject and the spirit of the times? The Post-Office authorities have, it is understood, taken it upon themselves to give an affirmative answer to the first question, and that answer seems to have been generally accepted as final, several parties who were disposed to organize companies for purposes of delivery in different cities having abandoned the enterprise in consequence. It is now stated, however, that a Hamilton firm, supported by a legal opinion, proposes to test the question, notwithstanding the pronounced view of the Minister of Justice in favour of the monopoly. Should the Government contention be maintained on this point, the second question will be in order: Can the Government of a free people rightly prevent any body of citizens from organizing to perform for themselves a purely business service, because the Government happens to be engaged in the same business? In other words, can the Government rightfully require the people of any city or community to pay for the performance of a certain service belonging necessarily and legitimately to their business, more than the *minimum* price for which a private company is willing