

# THE WEEK.

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## CURRENT TOPICS.

The Anti Option bill, which has been so long before the United States Congress, has been defeated, though a majority of forty-eight votes were recorded in its favour. Its defeat was accomplished by the "filibustering" tactics of its opponents, by means of which the vote was delayed until its promoter, Mr. Hatch, was obliged to take his chances by bringing it up under a suspension of the rules, in which case a two-thirds majority was required to pass it. Mr. Hatch, replying to those who denounced the bill as an "infamous" measure, said, "It is only 'infamous' in that it seeks to destroy the vilest commercial infamy that ever oppressed the producer or rested upon the boards of trade of this or any other country." He added, perhaps with too sanguine a spirit of prophecy, "You may delay it for a few days or weeks or

months, but it will come, as the result of the demand of the people, as surely as the sun rises and sets to-morrow."

As we prepare for press the second great tariff debate of the session is in progress. The indications in advance are that Mr. McCarthy's motion will have the support of a solid Opposition, though some of its propositions must be far from satisfactory to revenue-tariff-looking-to-free-trade reformers, but that it will not deduct more than a few votes from the regular Government majority. Several of the dissatisfied Government supporters will find it hard to vote against the affirmations of the preamble, which are in accord with what they have themselves declared, but they will probably refuse to accept the conclusion, on the ground that they have already decided that the Government shall have time to make up its mind. Two points of special interest are involved in this debate. It will afford a clue to the strength of the personal following which the mover will be able to rely on in his revolt against the Government, and it will test the feeling of Parliament on the principle of discrimination in favour of the Mother Country, a principle which it might be supposed would commend itself heartily to the many who pride themselves on their loyalty to the Empire.

France is joined to her protectionist idols. Probably the best thing to do is to leave her alone until such time as the exigencies caused by her enormous armaments may be less exacting, or until her people shall have their eyes opened, as those of the people of the American republic are becoming opened, to the supreme folly of obstructing the channels of trade, through which must flow the life-currents of national prosperity. Certainly the treaty which is the outcome of so much energetic and persevering effort on the part of the Canadian High Commissioner is not very encouraging to treaty-making as a Canadian industry. It would be unfair to pass judgment in advance of the High Commissioner's explanations, but it is hard to conceive of any satisfactory reason for the acceptance of so extraordinary a provision as that which secures to France the benefit of any concession which Canada may make to any other nation in respect not only to articles included in this treaty but to all articles whatsoever. That is to say, Canada is to be precluded from making an exclusive arrangement with any other nation while this treaty is in force.

Canada must be pretty badly in want of a treaty if she will consent to have her hands tied in that fashion, and for so infinitesimal a return.

Whether the rejection of the principal clauses of the Army Bill by the Committee of twenty-eight presages its defeat in the Reichstag or not, it certainly indicates a state of popular feeling to which the Emperor and his Chancellor will do well to take heed. It is very clear that the people of Germany cannot much longer be relied on to submit to the burden of militarism which is pressing them to the earth. If the reports published with regard to the indignities and cruelties suffered by soldier sat the hands of their officers are founded in fact, the popular movement cannot fail to be greatly stimulated thereby. What must be the heartlessness of the petty tyrants who can so abuse their authority as to drive a dozen young men to suicide within the space of a few weeks. Not the least outrageous part of the affairs is the ridiculously inadequate sentences passed upon those who have been convicted of such atrocious crimes. Surely the Government must be blind or infatuated, or it could not fail to foresee the effect such incidents must be producing in the popular mind. Can it be that German military law permits an officer to strike a subordinate at his own sweet will. There are few things more demoralizing to national character than an overshadowing military system like that of Germany. May America long be spared such an infliction.

It is now reported from Ottawa, we know not with how much authority, that Sir John Thompson has decided, in case the judgment of the Supreme Court affirms the right of the Government to entertain the appeal of the Manitoba minority, to proceed at once to the use of remedial measures. In view of the manifest inconsistency of his course in incurring the trouble and expense involved in the reference to the Court unless such is his intention, the rumour seems not improbable. The Government would place itself in an almost ludicrous position should it, after receiving a report from the Supreme Court affirming its power to give remedial legislation, decline or hesitate to use such power. This would be reversing the natural order of proceedings, and would expose the Government to the wrath of the appellants, who would have every reason to conclude that they had been trifled with. On the other hand, it cannot