

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

Mr. Chamberlain and the "Slender Thread."

Yesterday's papers contained a brief report of a speech made by the Colonial Secretary at a banquet given in London in honour of the opening of the Natal Railway. This speech is not without a certain significance. Such a speech by a Minister of State would have been impossible, say, ten years ago. It is not very long since a formidable party in England held and promulgated the doctrine that the Colonies were a source of weakness to Great Britain, that they added nothing to her prestige or influence, and should be cut adrift. Now we have one of the most prominent members of the Cabinet maintaining that upon the opinion of the Colonies regarding Great Britain's policy during the next few years depend the future of the British Empire. Mr. Chamberlain went on to speak of the slender thread which united the great Colonies with England as a thread capable of carrying a force of sentiment and sympathy which would be a potent factor in the history of the world, just as a slender wire would carry an electrical force capable of moving machinery. He heard on all hands that Imperial Federation was a vain, empty dream. He would not contest this opinion; but men must be blind who did not see that it was a dream that impressed itself on the mind of the English-speaking race—the sort of dream which, somehow or another, becomes eventually unaccountably realized. The signs of the times were already in the direction of such a movement.

The London Conservatives.

On Friday last the new club rooms of the London Conservatives were formally opened by Sir John Carling in the presence of three Ministers of State and a great gathering of Conservatives from far and near. We are informed that the Club has made rapid progress during the past year and has now over eighteen hundred members. It is expected that many more names will be added on account of the attractiveness of the Club's new quarters. The Club has an energetic and able

President in the person of Mr. William Gray to whose well-directed efforts and untiring zeal it is greatly owing that the present handsome and commodious premises have been secured. Mr. Gray and his fellow officers have every reason to congratulate themselves on the success of their opening day. The arrangements were complete and well carried out. The Club evidently knows how to manage things.

Something
Definite.

The speeches made by the Ministers at London on Friday were good. They did not conflict with one another, and there was no uncertain sound about them. In these particulars the Conservatives have the advantage over the Liberals. We know exactly where they stand on the trade question: the National policy is firmly adhered to and their faith in it is shown by the fact that no opportunity is lost to prove that were the Liberals to come into office that policy would be promptly swept away. On the Manitoba School Question an equally definite stand was taken: if in the end the minority has a grievance which is not remedied by Manitoba itself the Federal Government will take all reasonable and proper methods to have that wrong righted. It is the first duty of an Opposition to frame a clear and definite policy and lay it plainly before the people. It is not enough to point out the mistakes of the Government and expose its corruption and dirty deeds. All this is necessary. But something more is required, and that something is a policy about which there can be no doubt, and which everybody can understand.

La Patrie's
Eccentricities

The eccentricities of La Patrie, whose formal repudiation by Mr. Laurier seems to have given great satisfaction in Montreal, continue. In a recent issue, in its comment on the unveiling of the Chateauguay battle monument, it deplored De Salabery's course in joining the British army at a time when British and French troops were fighting one another. This has drawn a reply from Benjamin Sulte, who, after defending De Salabery, says: "For a long time past I have been neither American, nor French, nor English, but French-Canadian, or, if need be, Canadian purely and simply. That is the reason why I write the present article. It would be a curious thing to force me to place France above my own interests or my operations. By what right could that be done? Our accounts were settled with the Mother Country in 1763 by a shameful bankruptcy, the costs of which we paid. I have no desire to see a renewal of that régime. The Frenchmen who now live in Canada know that we are much better treated in Canada than they are in France. There is a limit in being French, after all." It was La Patrie that a few years ago based a series of furious articles against the Montreal Seminary on the donation by that institution of funds to aid in the erection of the Nelson monument in 1808. If La Patrie, as it says, represents the ideas and the beliefs of the old Liberal school, it is well that the Liberals of to-day have out-grown them.