

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics

The Death of  
Rev. D. J. Macdonnell.

Why it is that death so often selects for its victims the good and the useful, and passes by for what seems interminable years the evil and the useless is a question which no man can answer. It is only one of the many terrible mysteries of this mysterious world. The death of Mr. Macdonnell is a severe loss not only to the Presbyterian Church in Canada but to the whole community in which his inspiring life has been passed. Such men as Mr. Macdonnell are especially needed in Canada where narrowness and prejudice and bigotry flourish with discouraging vigour, and few have the courage to protest openly against the popular will. The country cannot afford to lose such men as the brave-hearted, clear-headed, and public-spirited divine who was for so many years the champion in this community of all that makes for righteousness and true liberty.

Sir Donald  
at Winnipeg.

Sir Donald Smith is now at Winnipeg and it is "confidently asserted" that his mission is to arrange a settlement of the school difficulty between the Dominion and Provincial Governments. He has already had lengthy interviews with Mr. Greenway and Archbishop Langevin, but the enterprising reporters had not, up to last night, been able to find out what was discussed or arranged at these interviews. If any one can settle this disturbing question it is certainly Sir Donald Smith. He commands the respect of the whole country and the motives of his mediation can in no way be suspected even by the most suspicious of politicians. What the result of these important negotiations may have been will likely be known in a day or two—perhaps before this paper is in the hands of its readers.

Dominion Day in  
Nova Scotia.

We have learned with pained surprise that the Liberals of Nova Scotia, led by Mr. Fielding and Mr. Longley, have voted against allowing the public schools of the Province to observe Dominion Day as a holiday. This action on the part of Mr. Fielding and Mr. Longley is too ridiculous to be treated seriously. Were it not that the ill-informed may be led to

attach some significance to this vote we would not trouble ourselves to notice it in these columns. Dominion Day has been generally and heartily observed in Nova Scotia for many years. It is, of course, a bank holiday, and all public offices are closed. If the schools have not honoured the day it is not the fault of the school-masters or the scholars. The vote in question is nothing but the outcome of vanity and a foolish craving for notoriety. Playing to the gods and ministering to local prejudices may win the temporary applause of the unthinking and the irresponsible, but it does not command the respect of the solid men of the community. Mr. Longley can ill afford to trifle with his political reputation. His loyalty has been seriously called in question on more than one occasion, and his protests have not been received with that readiness which he seems to have expected. As he aspires to a seat in the House of Commons it may be just as well to intimate in the politest possible terms that Canada will not care to accept as a member of Parliament or to extend her confidence to the politician to whom the observance of the national holiday is a hateful thing and to be prevented by the strong arm of the law.

Newfoundland  
Shores.

It is reported that information has been received from a trustworthy and semi-official source to the effect that negotiations are going on at present between France and England on the subject of the French shore of Newfoundland. The basis of the negotiations, so it is said, involves the ceding of certain of England's interests in the State of Tunis in exchange for the French claims in the ancient Colony. The negotiations are being conducted in Paris by Lord Dufferin, the British Ambassador. It is stated that the prospect for a settlement is good, and that the end will be reached in a few days. This must be welcome news to Newfoundland. By the French rights on the West shore the unfortunate Islanders have been practically excluded from that part of the country under the clause that allows the French fishermen the right to cure their fish there. This clause has been a millstone about the neck of the Colonists ever since its insertion in the treaty. The removal of this incubus will greatly facilitate the cause of confederation. It has been the chief objection to Newfoundland's coming into the Dominion. We are informed that the islanders who favour confederation now have every hope that the Colony's days of isolation are over, and that the entrance of the old Colony is only a question of time. The shorter that time is the better will it be for all concerned.

A Board  
of Conciliation.

The Venezuelan boundary question stands a fair chance now of being settled. The London Times remarked on Tuesday that it regards as of great importance the plan for the settlement of the Venezuelan dispute sent to it by its American correspondent, Mr. G. W. Smalley, who says it would be accepted by the United States, or proposed by the United States, if they had reason to believe that Great Britain would accept it. According to the cable despatch the plan is substantially the creation of a new joint Commission to consist of two Englishmen and two Americans, who would be charged with ascertaining the facts and with reporting thereon to the British and American Cabinets. If a majority of the Commission could not agree on