

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1877.

THE WEEK.

ALMOST the only feature of interest in the Ministerial programme, as laid down in the Lieut. Governor of Ontario's speech, is the proposal to give the franchise to farmers' sons. The tendency of our agricultural population, unfortunately, is to gravitate towards the cities, or towards the Western States. We do not suppose that the power of voting for members of Parliament will have any very perceptible effect in checking the restlessness and migratory habits of our young farmers; but still it is a move in the right direction. The son who stays at home, works on, manages, and eventually inherits his father's farm is certainly as useful a member of the community as his more ambitious brother, who is too often found among the loafers at street corners, or who carries such energy and capital, as he may possess, to a foreign land. The first debate of the Session took place concerning the exemption from taxation question, about which so much has been said lately. There can be little doubt that the principle of excusing certain properties and individuals from contributing to the the general municipal necessities, however well meant in its inception, has been carried to excess, and if it is true, that in Toronto alone, there is property exceeding in value eight millions of dollars which does not contribute a cent to the City treasury, we need not wonder that the very heavily taxed citizens do begin to grumble. Still, if we admit that the extent to which the exemption has hitherto been allowed is indefeasible in theory and objectionable in practice, we must urge that all the private properties,—that is, all that do not belong to the Government—have been acquired or built on the understanding that such favour would be continued to them, and that withdraw it *in toto*, suddenly, would be an injustice. As things are at present, our churches, our institutions and our clergymen have quite enough, perhaps more than enough, to do to pay their way, and the addition of taxes would be a very serious burden. Still, we not suppose we are in a worse plight than our neighbours, and, provided all are equitably and impartially dealt with, we shall not be the first to grumble.

It was with an intense feeling of relief that the public learnt that an arrangement had been come to between the manager and the engineers, and that, consequently, the strike at the Grand Trunk Railway was ended. It had continued quite long enough to show us how dependant we all are upon the one main artery of the country. The strikers had opportunities of putting their case before the world, which the Directors did not possess, and so the public has only *ex parte* statements on which to form a judgment. Still, we shall probably do no injustice if we assume that the men had some real grievances, whilst

other supposed grievances might have been explained and removed by a little conciliation on the part of their superiors. All may be well that ends well, is a doctrine of comfortable unction, but these sort of occurrences, somehow, leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth. The rioting, at several important points on the railway, was very discreditable, and the inability of the authorities to promptly suppress it was rather humiliating; affording similiar evidence to that which the Guibord case afforded, that, in times of emergency, we are liable to be brought to a deadlock by a conflict with jurisdictions. Authority and responsibility being divided and sub-divided between Municipal, Provincial and Federal Government, rowdiness has much in its favour. One effect of the strike, no doubt, was a large accumulation of freight, and lost time has had to be made up. But we venture to hope that, at least after the arrears have been worked off, the G. T. R. will have more quiet and rest on the line on Sundays than was, for instance, the case in this neighbourhood last Sunday.

The continuance of frost and snow, in a manner somewhat unusual in the Lake region during the earlier part of winter, agreeable though the weather may be to the well-clad, and healthy though it may be for all, does, nevertheless, bring with it grievous want, paralyzing, as it does, many industries on which a large portion of our town population depends for its daily bread. In Toronto, and in other cities, there undoubtedly is a large amount of distress. We are sorry to have to believe that fraud and imposture keep pace with the real poverty. In this city, at least, there is almost a premium upon deception offered by the want of unity of action amongst our charitable Societies. There is a charity enough, liberality enough, workers enough to look after and provide necessaries for the deserving poor, if there was any concert and harmony between the several agencies; but each nationality, each congregation, each Society goes its own way, with supreme indifference as to the movements of its fellow-workers. Hence, the natural result—waste of time and money, the same ground gone over many times, the same persons receiving, haphazard relief from several quarters; and hence a thick crop of fraud and impostures, the crafty and loud-mouthed obtaining much, the reserved sufferers being comparatively neglected. We are glad to hear that an attempt is being made to establish cordial and valuable co-operation amongst the different workers. If it is too late in the season for an entirely new system to be developed—and we believe it is needed—an alphabetical list of the poor might yet be compiled, shewing the amount of relief afforded by each society, and we are confident that, even by such a simple plan, a vast amount of fraud would be detected. Such a tabulated statement, placed in a central position, or divided into three sections, for the East, Centre, and West of the City, would

be an invaluable aid to the District Visitors, to whom and the clergy *alone* it should be accessible.

The question of peace or war is not yet decided finally at Constantinople. If the Porte succumbs to the pressure put upon it, there is yet, and will be for some time, the chance that some fresh demand may be made by Russia with which the dignity of the Ottoman Empire may make it impossible for the Sultan to comply, whilst, on the other hand, if he rides his high horse and snaps his fingers in the face of the assembled plenipotentiaries, there is still a probability that, before matters reach an irremediable extreme, a cold shiver may come over the Turk and his increasing appreciation of discretion may be in inverse proportion to his own valour. The difficulty seems to consist in this, that the Porte will not give satisfactory assurances of an honest intention to reform his evil ways except under such pressure and intervention as practically supersedes his supremacy in his own territories; and if his supremacy is superseded and he loses respect for himself and his tributaries lose all respect for him, matters will eventually become worse than they are now. The Powers cannot for ever maintain either a corps of occupation or even a gendarmerie. We seem to be at the beginning of the end, but the end, if it is to be reached soon, will not, we fear, be reached but through blood. That the Turk, who has his good qualities and should, even in these days, have credit for them, will remain as a European Power for very long we do not believe; but we are content to let time and his own inherent vices work his expulsion across the Bosphorus. At present neither the Provinces constituting Turkey in Europe nor the other European Powers are ready for such a complete change as the ejection of the Moslems would involve. If it must come now, we must make the best of it, though bloodshed and war come with it; but if the crisis can be postponed the benefit of the change may hereafter be reaped without a sword being drawn or a shot fired. Sooner or later, possibly very soon, the Cross will once more shine on the summit of the dome of the grand old church of the Heavenly Wisdom.

In the meantime both the wishes and the power of Russia seem to be very imperfectly understood. At one moment we are told that her army is in splendid condition and that the enthusiasm of the country for war is so intense, that the whole influence of the Czar in favour of peace is barely able to restrain it. At another we hear of depleted arsenals, miserable skeletons of regiments, disaffection in the army and general rottenness in the whole political system of the Empire. Then we are asked to read a Bulgarian manifesto to the "Blissful Czar," imploring his immediate intervention; at another moment we are credibly informed that the Christian population is loyal to the Porte and much prefers Turkish to Russian supremacy. Then