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## THE WEEK :

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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.

THE people of Canada are unhappily but too well used to hearing charges of the grossest corruption brought against their public men. Such charges are, to a great extent, the stock-in-trade of political orators of the stump-speech variety. When one of these in the course of a harangue accuses the leaders of the opposite party of misrepresentation, misappropriation of public funds for the reward of unscrupulous supporters, bribery of individuals and constituencies and so forth, little attention is usually given to the statements. It is assumed that they are either pure inventions or exaggerations and distortions of transactions which are capable of satisfactory explanation. But when a public man of the ability and standing of Sir Richard Cartwright comes before his constituents as one of the recognized leaders of a political party, and devotes a large part of a lengthy speech to formulating charges of the kind indicated; when he makes such charges openly, boldly and specifically, the case is altered. The country should demand an answer if none is voluntarily put forward. The three cases mentioned by Sir Richard Cartwright in his Ingersoll speech are seemingly definite enough to give opportunity for proof or disproof. To say nothing of the disgrace attached to the making of such charges, if unsubstantiated, or to bearing them if substantiated, at home, their publication in the leading political journals cannot fail to injure the reputation of the country abroad. Either Sir Charles Tupper did, or he did not, by misrepresentations, made in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown, divert a million and a half of the public money of the Dominion into an improper channel. Either the Dominion Government did, or it did not, cause a large sum of public money to be grossly misappropriated for the personal benefit of a member of Parliament, in connection with a New Brunswick bridge. Either that same Government did, or it did not, sell a large and valuable tract of Indian land to certain personal friends, at less than two-thirds of a cent per acre, such lands being shortly after re-sold for about a dollar an acre, to the great pecuniary gain of the persons concerned in the transaction and to the loss of

the public. The people of Canada have a right to know the whole truth in regard to such matters and should be content with nothing less. The fact of having publicly made such allegations, unless they are capable of the clearest proof, would, if the popular feeling were what it should be, make it impossible for Sir Richard Cartwright to remain in public life. If the charges are, on the other hand, capable of such proof, their effect should be to make it impossible for the men guilty of such acts to remain in public life. As a matter of fact, we dare say, little notice will be taken of the matter.

THE return of the Government candidate, as a result of the triangular contest which has been going on in Sarnia, will have surprised no one having a moderate knowledge of the local situation. Notwithstanding all the discussions of the past months there has been no upheaval of popular sentiment sufficiently acute to shake the position of Mr. Mowat and his colleagues in one of the old party strongholds. The strongest charges brought against them by the Conservative party organs and orators were those connected with the French schools and other educational questions. In regard to those it can hardly be denied that the action of the Department has been prompt and judicious, inasmuch that any footing left for partisan assault at this point is narrow and insecure. For prudential reasons, no doubt, the Conservative leaders and spokesmen refrained, in great measure, from serious attack on the most vulnerable point of their opponents' camp—its dealing with the Separate School question. In this respect the tactics of the Opposition, viewed from the standpoint of mere expediency, seem to have been singularly defective. They have gone far enough to arouse the fears of the hierarchy and insure the casting of a solid Catholic vote for the Government, without going far enough to lay hold of whatever strength there was to be gained from a campaign conducted on ultra-Protestant lines. Perhaps the most surprising thing in connection with the issue of the contest is the considerable vote polled for the Third-Party candidate. In all probability the voters of this party were detached from both the others to such an extent that its existence did little to affect the result in one way or the other. It operated largely, we dare say, as a Cave of Adullam, to which the discontented, disappointed and disgusted of both the old parties betook themselves, in company, no doubt, with a goodly band of sincere zealots and enthusiasts. The most discouraging feature of the case, to those who think serious reforms needed, is the evidence afforded that all things will remain for the present as they were. So long as the adherents of either party find themselves firmly entrenched in office, the prospect of great questions, such as some of those now coming to the front in Canada, being taken up by them in earnest, is exceedingly small. It is the old story. Those snugly settled on the treasury benches shun the risk involved in raising disturbing issues. They prefer to be left to enjoy quietly the sweets of office, and to avoid the necessity of discussing new and troublesome problems. On the other hand, the old party, in this instance, lacks aggressive leadership, and its Conservative instincts and record are both against great agitations. The Third Party not only is without leaders in whom the public have confidence as politicians or statesmen, but has made itself weak, if not ridiculous, by the absence of the sense of proportion displayed in both its platform and its methods. Evidently the great reformers, who are destined to bring about a revolution in Canadian politics and morals, have not yet come forward.

IN an address before the Club National, a week or two since, Premier Mercier is said to have made use of the following significant words: "Let us hope that these principles may never be misunderstood, and that we may not be called upon in any of our Provinces to have recourse to reprisals, and to remind the majorities who may be unjust that there is a minority which stands in need of protection." Being asked by an Associated Press agent if these words were intended as a threat to the Protestant majorities of the other Provinces, Mr. Mercier is said to have replied, "Not as a threat, but surely as a warning to the majorities in the other Provinces." Explaining his meaning more fully, he went on

to say, that "Equal Rights must apply to the minorities in every province, and that if the Federal Act is to be applied in some other province against the rights of the minorities and to the abolition of their separate schools where they exist by law, he could not see why the same rule should not apply to the minority of the Province of Quebec." The principle on which he seeks to base this dictum is "that the minorities have no rights because they are French or English, Catholic or Protestant, but that they have rights because they are the minorities, entitled to be protected and to enjoy the same rights as the majorities." This is well put. No fair-minded person can refuse to accept such a principle. The question is—and it is undoubtedly a question of the gravest importance—Is Mr. Mercier's application of it a fair and valid application? The comparison immediately suggested is that between the Provinces of Manitoba and Quebec, and Mr. Mercier's inference seemingly is, if the words "in every province" are correctly reported, that should Manitoba proceed to do away with the Catholic Separate Schools which have been established by law in that Province, Quebec would be justified in doing away with the Protestant Separate Schools which have been established by law within its domain. Taking our stand for a moment upon this ground, it is obvious that Mr. Mercier's argument begs the question in at least two important particulars. It assumes, in the first place, that the minorities in the two provinces stand in the same relation to the respective majorities in regard to the schools in question. With this we deal below. It assumes, in the second place, that the legal standing of the respective Separate Schools, in relation to the British North America Act, is the same. On this point it is sufficient to refer to a communication from Mr. F. Beverley Robertson, of Winnipeg, in a former number of this paper, and our comments thereon in a subsequent number. It is true that Mr. A. E. McPhillips, of the same city, controverts, in our last issue, Mr. Robertson's argument. But Mr. McPhillips' reasoning fails, if we mistake not, at the crucial point. Its conclusiveness turns entirely upon the question of fact, whether Catholic Separate Schools existed in "practice" in Manitoba before the union. But that question of fact is, it is clear, not merely whether schools were in operation under the direction and control of the Catholic Church, but whether these schools were in any way recognized as part of a public school system and aided by public funds. No one in Manitoba, so far as we are aware, proposes to forbid the Roman Catholics, or any other body, to establish and support Separate Schools. The question is simply whether such schools shall be recognized as part of the educational system of the Province, and be aided as such from the public chest. Hence, unless it can be shown that Catholic Separate Schools existed in such a form and sense—and this Mr. McPhillips will hardly attempt—it clearly follows that the abolition of those now existing could not possibly be construed as a taking away of any privilege possessed even in "practice" before Confederation.

LET us test Premier Mercier's principle on a higher plane. The man who would assent for a moment to a proposal to deprive the Catholic minority of Manitoba, or Ontario, of a single right secured by law or custom to the Protestant minority of Quebec, would be a sorry specimen of an "Equal Rights" advocate, or of a Protestant. It is true, as is often declared, with perhaps unnecessary emphasis, that this is a British country, and that the rights of English-speaking subjects must be secured in every part of it. It would be intolerable, for instance, that the English-speaking minority in Quebec should be placed by law at any disadvantage, or deprived of any right or privilege, as compared with their fellow-citizens of French origin. But French-Canadians are also British subjects, and it would be just as intolerable, in the eyes of all true British-Canadians, that a French-speaking minority in any Province of the Dominion should be placed by law at any disadvantage as compared with their fellow-citizens of English origin. And the same statement, *mutatis mutandis*, may be made with equal emphasis in regard to the rights and privileges of Catholics and Protestants respectively. The vice in Mr. Mercier's reasoning lies in his