

A Record
Breaker.

Before the next number of THE WEEK reaches its readers, the present Canadian Parliament will have ceased to exist. Its many remarkable characteristics are thus brightly summed up by the Montreal Star: "This present Parliament of ours is a record breaker, and, it will be trusted, a record maker for all time to come. No other Canadian Parliament ever drew six indemnities nor tried to pass six supply bills. No other House ever sat 129 hours in continuous session. No other Parliament ever saw three Premiers die, or ever was led by four Premiers drawn without break from the same political party. Since Confederation the Senate has not had a Premier until this Parliament, and this remarkable body has given it two. No Parliament since Confederation has seen such a chaotic collection of 'groups' on the floor of its House of Commons; and in few has the Senate been so peaceful. As long-distance talkers, the score or so of members who have been blocking the progress of the Remedial Bill are probably now in possession of the world's championship, and unless some Parliament begins its 'talkie-talkie' at an earlier hour than 3 o'clock on Monday, they will retain that doubtful fame for all time to come."

England's
Education Bill.

The London newspapers of April 1st devote much space to the consideration of the Government Education Bill which had been introduced in the House the previous day by Sir John Gorst. The Times in the course of an approving leader says that the Bill "proves to be a measure even larger in its scope and more interesting in its specific proposals than had been generally anticipated. In his comments on the speech of the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Acland, his predecessor in office, described the measure as 'the most enormous change in the educational system which this country had ever seen.' The description is certainly exaggerated, when we compare Sir John Gorst's Bill with Mr. Forster's Act of 1870, which established the principle of national and compulsory education and set up School Boards all over the country. It is, however, near enough to the truth to render it probable that Mr. Acland's forecast of 'long debates' will be realized. A Bill including a new departure in policy in dealing with a question of supreme importance, and, at the same time, of great complexity in its details, cannot, it is evident, be discussed to any advantage until its provisions can be studied in print. It may be said, at least, that a well-considered effort has been made to save the voluntary schools from extinction, and this, as Sir John Gorst conclusively showed, is an object of national importance."

The System
Entirely Changed.

The Daily News appears to be oppressed by the sweeping changes which the Bill will make and expects that the measure will meet with strong opposition: "The Bill which the Vice-President of the Council has introduced entirely alters the whole system of elementary teaching which has prevailed in this country for the last quarter of a century. It deals also with secondary Education, which has hardly yet arrived at a systematic form. But the elementary part of it will excite the most interest and awaken the keenest criticism. It strikes a fatal blow at the independence of the School Boards, and almost threatens the existence of the Education Department. It favours sectarian schools at the expense of schools under popular control, and it is not conducive to the maintenance of public economy. The principle of the Bill, as stated by Sir John Gorst, is 'the establishment in every county and county borough of a paramount educational authority, which is to be the one channel

through which public money is to arrive at the different schools.' The Bill will meet with strong opposition especially so far as it raises the religious difficulty again, and as it interferes, through bodies elected for another purpose, with the powers of the School Board, acting under their direct responsibility to the ratepayers."

Other
Opinions.

The Daily Telegraph says that "for the present, every fair-minded critic will recognize in Sir John Gorst's measure a statesmanlike and, we hope, successful attempt to grapple with the problems of National education." The Morning Post also approves, remarking that "the Education Bill having been launched should be persistently urged on its course, and if Ministers are only steadfast in their purpose they will add a fair and useful solution of a difficult and vexed problem to the number of their legislative achievements in the present session." But the Daily Chronicle attacks the measure in strong terms—which is only to be expected. With great severity it remarks: "The Education Bill supplies a crucial instance of the determined recklessness—if we may use such a phrase—with which the present Government carry on their campaign of reaction. Early in his speech Sir John Gorst revealed the point of view from which he and his colleagues approached the question by declaring that 'as things are, the only salvation of the rural district, such as it is, is the parson of the village.' Voluntary schools are, therefore, to receive a grant of 4s. a head simply on the ground that they are 'Voluntary'—that is to say, that they are absolutely under the control of the 'parson of the village.' No new School Board will be created under the Bill; many may be extinguished, and a power which was fought bitterly and successfully in the debates on Lord Sandon's Bill has been placed in the hands of a new and untried authority. A system which was working well, and which has done great things for the intellectual and moral life of the people, is to be brought to naught. Undenominational education is at an end; the reign of denominationalism, lavishly endowed in its own establishments and freely extended to the State schools, begins."

South Africa's
Presidents.

The African Critic which we have just received has a significant note on the recent meeting of the two Presidents of the South African Republics. The Critic remarks that "President Kruger has stated that there was nothing secret in the meeting between himself and President Steyn, of the Orange Free State; but there is a plentiful lack of any information as to what actually passed between the two Administrators on the occasion. 'The voice of the burgher' is the invariable excuse which President Kruger adduces for any act or expression which may prove hostile to British subjects in the Transvaal. This newly-improvised reading of the 'Vox populi, vox Dei,' of the ancients is unacceptable to the rest of the civilized world. The attempt on his part to palliate the wholesale maintenance of an armed burgher force in continuous attendance at and around Johannesburg is entirely unjustifiable by any such supposition (which Mr. Kruger advances as a fact) as that it is 'necessary that they should be properly equipped against surprises similar to that of Dr. Jameson.' No such 'surprise' is possible. But there are 'surprises' which Mr. Kruger will rue; and they will be sprung upon him with convincing force if he persist in baiting the British lion too long while the latter's present temper of defence and defiance prevails." The South African papers, for the most part, appear to be extremely hostile to old Oom Paul.