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## THE WEEK:

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### CURRENT TOPICS.

One good result of athletic games is the bringing together of friends and acquaintances, often from considerable distances, and the revival of old friendships, as well as the forming of new. There are grey-haired men who will travel hundreds of miles to see a favorite game well played—especially is this true of the good old English game Cricket. There are men who came to see the match between Lord Hawke's English eleven, and an eleven of Ontario players, who will recall the batting of Grace on the old Toronto Cricket Ground many years ago, and who will eagerly compare notes of the great match of the week and other famous matches of days long gone by. The friends of cricket are of the staunchest kind; no new game, be it

lacrosse, baseball, or what not, can for a moment challenge their affection for it. This feeling is by no means confined to people of wealth and leisure. The number is by no means small in Canada, of men in humble life, whose great pleasure it is to see a good game of cricket. We refer not merely to those who first trundled a ball, or wielded a bat on a village green in "Merrie England," but to men who acquired their first taste for the game on Canadian soil. Cricket has been called a game for gentlemen. We have seen many a match in our day, but we have yet to see one where an angry word has been spoken, or a blow struck by the players. Cricket deserves the cordial support of our people, as one of the best, if not the best, of athletic games which provide health and recreation for the British race.

The London *Spectator* of the 17th ult., referring to the clamour against the House of Lords, suggests one very mild change which it thinks might remedy some of the admitted evils connected with the operation of that House as at present constituted. The remedy suggested is simply to copy the example of Prussia, France, and several other European states, by allowing Ministers of the Crown to sit and speak, though not to vote, in both Houses. This change might go far, the *Spectator* thinks, by admitting such men as Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, to take a part in the debates in the Lords, to restore the balance of debating power in the Upper House. As things are at present, the few able speakers on the Government side, in the Lords—Lords Rosebery, Herschel, Kimberly, and Spencer—are "borne down by the weight of oratorical ability possessed by the Unionists." To an observer at a distance no reasonable objection suggests itself to such a change, though it seems questionable whether the conduct of business in the Commons would not suffer through the attempt of the ablest members of the Government to do duty in two places at the same time. But this arrangement would do nothing to remedy the enormous disproportion in voting power in the Upper Chamber, and it is the inequality of votes rather than any inequality of oratorical power, which is creating the outcry against the Lords at the present time. There is this, however, to be said in favour of the *Spectator's* proposal: It would give to a Premier who, like Lord Rosebery, has the misfortune to be a peer, a much better chance to

sustain himself at the head of the Government. In fact, as things are now shaping themselves, it is becoming exceedingly doubtful whether any member of the Upper House can long sustain himself in the premiership unless he be permitted to have a seat in the Commons.

The late number of the *Dispatch*, of Woodstock, New Brunswick, contains a practical article on the question of a union of the Maritime Provinces. The writer argues that the saving in expense effected by such union, while worth considering, would not be nearly so great as Westerners are accustomed to assume, measuring by their own higher rates of remuneration for political services. For instance, the combined salaries of the premiers of the three provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, amount to only seven hundred dollars more than the \$7,000 paid Sir Oliver Mowat. But, then, the combined populations of the three would be less than half that of Ontario alone. "Again, while the members of the Ontario Legislature are paid \$600 each, for the session, the members of the New Brunswick Legislature get \$300 each, of Nova Scotia \$500 each, and of Prince Edward Island \$172 apiece. Allowing \$600 each for the legislators of Ontario, the total expense per annum would be \$54,000. Forty members for New Brunswick at \$300, forty for Nova Scotia at \$500, and thirty for Prince Edward Island at \$172, make a total cost of \$37,000. So that the 110 members in the Maritime Provinces are not paid as much as the ninety members in Ontario.' That, however, seems hardly to be the logical way of computing the saving to be effected. It does not follow that, should the three provinces see fit to unite their forces, they would be obliged to adopt the more expensive habits of the Western provinces. That would be a matter of choice, not necessity. Nor is it clear that with less than half the population, the new province would need a larger number of legislators than Ontario. The *Dispatch* thinks that the consolidated province would do very well with fifty or less. Nothing is said by the *Dispatch* about the reduction in the number of Ministers and of subordinate officials. It admits, however, that maritime union, on the grounds of economy and convenience, is a question well worth considering, and that it would result in an increase of influence in the Federal Parliament. It is probably only a question of time.