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The Week.

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MACDONELL v. ROBINSON.

The lawsuit commenced more than a year ago by Mr. Macdonell against the publisher of THE WEEK, on account of a paragraph which appeared in that journal relative to a charge brought by Mr. Macdonell against Mr. S. H. Blake has been hitherto prevented from coming to issue by the length of the interlocutory proceedings. It has been agreed that the action shall be prosecuted no further. We have now to say that if any words in the paragraph which gave rise to the action are capable of being construed so as to reflect on Mr. Macdonell in his professional capacity, as no such reflection was intended, the words are withdrawn, and regret is expressed by us for their insertion.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

SOME of our contemporaries have been rebuked for discussing Riel's case on the ground that it is still before the Courts. We should be very sorry to countenance anything like tampering with public justice; but as the appeal is on a question of jurisdiction and on the merits of the case, there seems to be no objection to discussing the merits, much less do we see any objection to discussing the principles which should guide the Executive in exercising or refusing to exercise the prerogative of mercy. For ourselves, however, we have nothing more to say. We deprecate the intrusion of any Party influences or considerations into the domain of justice. Under a law necessary to the preservation of all States, which was made long before this rebellion occurred, and by a tribunal the impartiality of which there is no reason to doubt, Riel has been found guilty of treason, a crime which, if not so degrading and repulsive as many others, is of all crimes the most dangerous to the community. If any extenuating circumstance has come to light, if any flaw has been found in the evidence, by all means let justice be stayed; otherwise it ought to take its course. The Indians who were set on by Riel suffer the full penalty of their offences, and are sent without compunction to the scaffold, though they, being mere children in understanding, must be held far less guilty than their instigator. But if it is found impossible to carry out Riel's sentence because he was the champion of the French element and the French are resolved to protect him, let the ground of political necessity be frankly avowed. The worst of all solutions is a lie. The wretch who was executed for the murder of

Mr. Brown was really insane, though, as his insanity was caused by dissipation, it was criminal; but nobody who is in his own senses believes that the planner, organizer and leader of the rebellion in the North-West was not sane enough to be accountable for his actions.

OUR thanks are due and are very heartily paid to the *Mail* for putting what ought to be a final extinguisher, so far as Canada is concerned, on Imperial Confederation. It was time that our political horizon should be cleared of this nebulous fancy, which obscured and confused our view, while it never took or was likely to take a definite, much less a practical, form. This has now been effectually done. If the great Conservative and Imperialist organ of the Dominion pronounces against the scheme, what chance has the scheme of acceptance here? Of the two intelligible objects of the project, the submission of the Colonies to an Imperial tariff and their assessment to Imperial armaments, neither would receive the assent of a hundredth part of our people. The unlimited exportation of Imperial pauperism and vagrancy to Colonial shores, if that may be reckoned as a third object, would scarcely find more favour than the other two. That the refusal to put back the clock and part with our self-government for the sake of a nominal representation in a Parliament on the other side of the Atlantic implies no want of affection for the Mother Country, of gratitude for all that she has given us, of pride in her greatness, or of desire that the bond of the heart between us and her may endure for ever, the character of the *Mail* itself is a sufficient guarantee.

A BAD feeling between French and English, in Canada, has been manifesting itself ever since the outbreak of Riel's rebellion; but it would be a mistake to conclude that it is universal and represents an implacable antipathy of the two races. There are many English and many French-Canadians by whom it is not shared, who deprecate the existence of any feeling of mutual hostility, and look with horror upon anything approaching to a war of races. But that hostile feelings of race are being industriously fomented by individuals is as undeniable as it is regrettable. The feeling of alienation and of hostility unhappily has a tendency to increase. As is natural, perhaps, the greatest feeling is manifested by the French; and it is desirable to see if it has any and what justification. There can be no doubt whatever that there are French journalists anxious to save the neck of Riel for no other reason than that he has French blood in his veins: the motive is avowed. We need not say that justice cannot be administered in this way; no man can be executed or saved from the gallows because he is French or English or of any other nationality. There are people who allege that none but a fanatic can desire to see justice take its course in the case of Riel. With such it is useless to argue. There may be some grains of reality in some of the complaints of the French. If it be true that, in the great majority of cases, a French-Canadian cannot get an answer, in the same language, to a question put in French to the average public officer, where French is one of the official languages, there is ground of complaint; but the habit of answering in English, if it exists, would not have sprung up if it were attended with substantial inconvenience, much less if it constituted a real grievance. But if there be any ground for complaint, correction of an inconvenient practice may fairly be called for. Another complaint is that of twenty-six agricultural instructors appointed in the North-West not one is a French-Canadian or a Roman Catholic. If, by accident or design, anything like injustice has been done here, it ought to be corrected in future appointments. But the claims of race and religion are being pushed to an extent which it is impossible to concede. The claim that one-third of the North-West should be reserved for exclusively French colonization is one that cannot be listened to. The effect of such an arrangement would be indefinitely to retard the settlement of the country. If left to itself the North-West will fill up with an English-speaking people; but if one-third of it had to wait till it could be filled by French-speaking colonists it would be indefinitely condemned to sterility: for fast as the French-Canadians increase, they could not for a century do much towards filling up one-third of the vast area of the North-West. Whether eight French-speaking Senators from Quebec