



PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

BY THE

GRIP PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.

26 and 28 Front Street West, Toronto, Ont.

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PAYABLE STRICTLY IN ADVANCE.

To United States and
Canada.

To Great Britain and
Ireland.

One year, \$2.00; six months - \$1.00 | One year \$2.50

Remittances on account of subscriptions are acknowledged by change in the date of the printed address-label.

In remitting stamps, please send one-cent stamps only.
Messrs. JOHN HADDON & Co., Advertising Contractors, Fleet St. London, Eng., are the sole agents for GRIP in Great Britain.

Comments on the Cartoons.



THE PROHIBITION "QUESTION."
—Canada has a new political party. Although as yet small, it has proven itself formidable enough to make trouble for the two older organizations by upsetting their calculations in connection with election contests. In West Lambton, the other day, according to the view of some "old parliamentary hands," it secured the defeat of the Conservative candidate, and in the next campaign it may play old hob in the same way with the Liberal standard-bearer. Now, it is pertinent to enquire at

this stage whether this is a mere wanton interference with the working of our political system? If so, it ought to be abandoned, and the men who are actively promoting it deserve a severe reprimand as unruly citizens. This raises the question, What is a political party for? To which the correct answer is—a political party is an organization intended to secure the carrying out of principles which are believed by its adherents to be in the interest of the country. When once this work is achieved—when the principle of principles have been crystallized into law—the work of the party is done, and it ought to go out of existence, or

re-shape itself around some new issue. Experience shows us that this is not the usual history of political parties; generally speaking, they remain in active operation without any new issue after they have accomplished their original task, and gradually the position is reversed—the party becomes everything and its object nothing. This appears to be the condition at which the Republican party of the United States and both the old parties of this Dominion have arrived. Just as the Republicans across the line are still dragging out a useless existence on issues that were settled twenty years ago, so the Liberals here are blind to the questions of the present time (with the single exception of Reciprocity), and the Conservatives have long forgotten what their original principles, if they ever had any, were. Now, the men who have stepped out into a new party conceive that the times demand some radical reforms—notably the prohibition of the liquor traffic. If it cannot be shown that one or both the existing parties earnestly espouse this cause, then these citizens are entirely justified in their action, whatever trouble it may make for the party managers. What attitude do the old parties as such hold on the issue referred to? The Conservative party makes no pretence of being for temperance, like the Democratic camp across the way; it is frankly and openly for the saloon. The Liberal party *does* pretend to be in favor of temperance, as to its individual membership, but as an organization it refuses to move. A prohibition law would be carried out about as faithfully under the one as the other—that is to say, neither of them would appoint officers who really wanted to do their duty. The saloon vote weighs too heavily in the calculations of both. If prohibition is desirable, the only road to it is *via* a new party. So says Dr. Sutherland, and it remains for somebody to demolish his logic.

WILL IT COME TO PASS?—That entirely reliable journal, the *Mail*, says editorially:—"Intelligent observers in Quebec say that a surprise is in store for the country—that before the end of another year Mr. Mercier will be Sir John Macdonald's right hand man in that Province, *vice* Sir Hector, who is to be deposed. Mr. Mercier wants money, the Province being overwhelmed with debt, and cannot hope to obtain 'better terms' while he remains hostile to the Old Man. The Old Man, in turn, wants Quebec support, especially in view of the upheaval in Ontario, and Mr. Mercier is just the man to secure it for him provided an amicable understanding can be reached. This story is believed by many Nationalists and Conservatives, and we give it for what it is worth. Sir John has made just as queer alliances in the course of his life, and Mr. Mercier is not very strait-laced. He would probably sacrifice Mr. Laurier and the Dominion Liberals without a qualm for 'better terms' to the extent of ten millions."

NOTWITHSTANDING the appeal in which GRIP joined for a commutation of the death sentence in the Guelph murder case, Harvey was hanged on the 29th. No more need be said about the wretched man himself, but once more we take occasion to protest against sheriffs hiring outsiders to do their judicial murdering for them. If a sheriff takes the sweets of his office, he ought to be obliged to take the sour as well. The engaging of amateur hangmen is in every way demoralizing, both to the miserable fellows who secure the "jobs" and to the community at large.

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MR. NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN has "let up" on Herchmer long enough to deliver an address on Education at the opening of Lansdowne College, Portage la Prairie. A very fine audience assembled to hear him, and need we say the shiny-pated poet of the Prairie gave them an oration which recalled the palmy days of Demosthenes? Davin may not be able to clean out the Augean stables of the mounted police barracks, but he *can* orate, and no mistake!

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THE asylum on Queen street is unhappily pretty well crowded, but space ought to be found there for the handful of fanatical fools who disgraced Toronto by assaulting the procession on the occasion of the reception of Archbishop Walsh a few evenings ago. We cannot