

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

The choice of Sir Donald Smith to be High Commissioner of Canada in London is well received on all hands. Sir Donald is also sworn in as a Privy Councillor. That step is most appropriate. The object of the office is to have in England a Canadian ambassador. A rich man should be appointed in order that he may discharge the social functions necessary to keep the country prominent. Too many of our politicians appear to ignore entirely this side of life. We all have to work so hard in Canada that we are apt to forget the claims of society. Sir Donald Smith can and will answer these claims most satisfactorily. Then it is always well to have an agent on the spot—one who can represent verbally Canada's necessities and wishes. So much can be said which cannot be written. In old colonial times, the Colonies had their agents in London. They were there looked upon as paid agents more than as political appointees. The presence in London to-day of agents for all the Colonies is attributable to two things—first, to promote the general interests of the Colony, and next, to secure immigration. These two points are part of the scheme of the federation of Greater Britain and as far as Canada is concerned they can not be trusted to a better man than Sir Donald Smith. We look for the very happiest results from his appointment.

### Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Resignation.

The late Premier (for so we must now call him), Sir Mackenzie Bowell, has practised the virtue of retirement. He is no longer Premier of Canada. His tenure of office was stormy and short. When he succeeded to the position he was handicapped by much difficulty. If Sir John Thompson had lived he would probably have encountered the same troubles as Sir Mackenzie Bowell. The latter received as a legacy the disturbing Manitoba Schools question. He pledged the French-Canadian ministers that a measure would be introduced on the lines of the decision of the Imperial Privy Council. Exactly under what circumstances that pledge came to be given is not yet known. But when Sir Mackenzie met his English speaking colleagues then his difficulties began. The McCarthy wing of malcontents saw their chance. Pressure was brought to get the pledge made by the Premier withdrawn. In this crisis Sir Mackenzie was firm. His Ministry seemed on the point of collapsing and he had the game in his own hands. If he resigned, the Liberals

would be called on to form a Ministry and the Conservatives would have to face a general election immediately. The Conservative party saw the position. The bolters came back, and Sir Mackenzie triumphed. The victory was dearly bought. He secured the fulfilment of his pledge and he gave a chance to the Conservative party to rally. But he himself was sacrificed. History now has to record the curious fact of the fall of an Orange Premier because he tried to aid the Roman Catholics to get Separate Schools.

### The New Premier.

Sir Charles Tupper now reigns. He has, in many respects, the qualifications necessary for his high position. He can deal with large matters in a large way and has also that capacity for detail without which no man can achieve great things. Having been in touch for so long with the centre of the Empire he will have learned that knowledge of the main-springs of policy which other politicians who have only local knowledge cannot gain. But he has also some things to unlearn. The very fact of his having Imperialist sentiments is against him with a section of the people of Canada, who have what may be called a Provincial tone of thought. They are nervously afraid that the interests of Canada will be sacrificed to Imperial requirements. Sir Charles may expect to find a good deal of difficulty with these people. Then, again, as he himself has been for some time out of active Canadian politics his re-appearance is, to some extent, a resurrection—and in politics there is no resurrection. Then, again, Sir Charles is not as young as he was—but he has not lost any of his powers of hard hitting. His opponents will still find him active enough. The greatest objection urged against him is his reputation, well or ill deserved we do not pretend to say, for persuasive methods in politics, that kind of method which in old times Philip of Macedon used against Demosthenes. When Sir Charles and Sir John Macdonald were in their glory times were flush and there was plenty of money to spend among the constituencies. Those days are gone. If there is any money to be spent now it must come from the "party." But in spite of all the objections which may be urged against Sir Charles Tupper, he is undeniably a strong man—the strongest man the Conservative party could have chosen—in fact, almost the only man they could have served under. He has courage, tenacity, eloquence, and great powers of carrying a policy to its practical and logical conclusion. If he succeeds in retaining the reins of power we may rely on his making history for us. His task is to choke off the Manitoba school matter and direct the attention of the electorate to trade questions.

### The Sohmer Park Meeting.

It is very unpleasant to observe how remarkable is the difference between the Liberal and the Conservative reports of the Sohmer Park meeting in Montreal last Friday evening. According to the Montreal Gazette and the Toronto Mail and Empire the meeting was practically a failure—"compared with the Laurier meeting of a few months ago in the same place it was a dismal fiasco." But, according to the Montreal Herald and the Toronto Globe, never was such a meeting held in Canada,—“it was the largest and most enthusiastic gathering ever seen in the Canadian metropolis.” With regard to the attendance the Conservative papers place the number at between five and six thousand at the outside limit; the Liberals claim fully twelve thousand. A difference of six thousand in the estimate is a little too much. But when the party journals of one side deride the meeting as a fiasco and those of the other proclaim it a magnificent