

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

Grand Trunk Railway.

The Grand Trunk Railway has done a great deal for Canada, and it is a matter of general regret amongst Canadians that the great railway has not been as prosperous as it deserved to be. The Company cannot expect substantial success as long as its head offices are in England. Sir Henry Tyler and the Board of Directors may not have been always wise in their management, but it is doubtful whether any other President or Board would have done much better under the disadvantageous circumstances which must attend the present method of management. The general in command of an army has to be on the spot. He would not succeed very well three thousand miles away from the scene of action.

The Scandal Session.

The politics of the Dominion have now come to this pass, that the last session before each prospective general election is made pre-eminently a scandal session. Already, though the session is scarcely two weeks old, the scandal-heaps of years are being raked over, rusty weapons from dilapidated armories re-furbished, and the annual battle-grounds of a dozen years ploughed over in search of fresh material. The result is to make our national Parliament a most undignified spectacle at home and to expose it to reproach or contempt abroad. What is to be done? Far be it from us to say that if the Opposition honestly believe, as we must suppose them to do, that the long course of the Conservative administration has left a trail of misappropriations of public moneys, and corruption of individuals and constituencies, it is not their duty to make every effort to bring the evil deeds to light. But is there no possible way of making a clean sweep of the unsavoury business, so far as the past is concerned, once for all? Surely for the sake of the national reputation, as well as of the self-respect and dignity of Parliament and people, both parties should try to find some righteous way of making a perpetual end to this thing, so far as the past is concerned, so as to let the new Parliament be it Conservative or Liberal, commence with a clean slate in this respect.

Mr. Sifton and the School Question.

It is difficult to understand on what grounds the Minister of Finance and some other members of Parliament denounced the action of the Attorney-General of Manitoba in addressing the electors of Haldimand, as one of political indecency. It was surely desirable, in view of an election in which the school question was understood to be specially involved, that honest and intelligent electors should get all the information possible upon the subject. Who more competent to inform them, in regard at least to some of its historical phases, than a member of the Government of Manitoba, who had full personal knowledge of the various steps in the process of doing away with the old and substituting the new system, from the beginning of the agitation? Moreover, is it not a free country? Has not a citizen of one Province a perfect right to defend his Province all over the Dominion, if he pleases, in a matter in which the interests of that Province are specially involved, provided the electors are willing to hear him? Have those electors not a perfect right to get all the information they can on the question? Mr. Sifton's official position could make it improper for him to argue the case, only on the theory that he and his Government were considering the subject in a judicial capacity, which they do not, we think, pretend. He appeared in the capacity of an advocate, rather than in that of a judge. Even the *Mail and Empire* was constrained to admit the fairness and moderation of his address in Toronto, and if he had a right to address an audience which was glad to hear him in Toronto, why not in Haldimand? On the whole does not Mr. Foster owe Mr. Sifton an amende for Parliamentary discourtesy to a visitor from a sister Province?

Three Points.

Touching the Manitoba agitation there are three questions which seem to us to be of a good deal of importance, upon which little has been said. The first regards the genuineness, or the reverse, of the alleged fourth Bill of Rights. It can hardly be denied that the interpretation of the clause in the Constitution upon which the case of the minority is based turns largely upon the question whether that clause was drawn up in the light of the third Bill of Rights in which no mention of Separate Schools was made, or in the light of the fourth alleged Bill, which contained specific reference to that question. If the Dominion Privy Council really acted in a judicial capacity, should it not have tried to set this question at rest by evidence? In the second place, there is an important group of questions clustered around the large judicial and moral principle which should determine to what extent, and for what length of time, the compact made with a few thousands of the original settlers of a country or province are morally binding upon hundreds of thousands or even millions of their successors, especially when, as Senator Boulton reminded his fellow-members of the Upper Chamber, the bounds of the original territory have been greatly enlarged. Surely the dead hand ought not to restrict the liberty and progress of the living multitudes through all generations? Thirdly, and to our thinking more important still, have we sufficient evidence in the case in question that the demand