

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

The British Government.

Once more the political situation in the Mother Country has veered somewhat, and it is conceded that, in the absence of some great blunder in tactics, the Rosebery Government is now likely to hold out for the session. Perhaps the change is due in no small measure to the indomitable pluck with which the battle is being fought by the leaders in the Commons. At any rate the Government majority, which reached its lowest point on the first test-vote of the session, has risen to a somewhat higher level, and will, it is thought, remain at about that level for the session. Whether this result is due more to the courage and ability of the Liberal leaders, or to the operation of some feeling akin to jealousy or distrust of their colleagues in the Conservative ranks, is not easy to determine. The rumour that the Conservatives in the Commons are rather restive under the self-imposed leadership of Mr. Chamberlain has so much verisimilitude that one is prone to believe that there may be a good deal of truth in the gossip. Should the enemy be defeated under Mr. Chamberlain's leadership, it would be hard to deny him a prominence in the councils of the new Government which would ill accord with the probable tastes and preferences of the patrician leader of the Tories and his admirers. The situation on both sides of the House is interesting, and further developments will be watched with eager interest, even across continents and oceans.

Parliamentary Closure.

Whatever else may be said of Sir William Harcourt as a Parliamentarian it cannot be alleged that he is wanting in courage. He has already resorted to the practice of closure for the purpose of disposing of the Queen's speech, and getting at the real business of the session. To most observers of a practical turn of mind it seems that the whole procedure of opening Parliament might advantageously be reformed. The "Speech

from the Throne" meant something at a time when the monarch spoke his own opinions, and made his own suggestions; it means nothing now except that the monarch's advisers intend to ask Parliament to take up certain lines of legislative work. The Speech is a product of that kind of skill which succeeds in saying nothing while apparently saying something, and the address in reply to it is intended to be an echo of it. If it becomes anything else that will be the result of an attempt on the part of some member to tack on statements of which the Government of the day do not approve, and if they have a majority the attempt must fail. It is not surprising to find a statesman of the stamp of Sir William Harcourt trying to bring the whole procedure into contempt by forcing the address through under closure, as soon as he found that he had a majority on his side.

The Manitoba School Question.

The appointment of so early a day as the 26th inst., for the hearing of counsel on behalf of the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba, as a sequence of the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council, would seem to indicate that the Government intends to lose no time in deciding upon its policy in regard to that delicate matter. Whether the decision will first be announced to Parliament assembled for another session, or will be made an issue in the approaching election, remains to be seen. In either case the clear announcement of the Government's intentions will be a franker and more courageous course than the further postponement of the matter, for which the temptation must be considerable. Meanwhile the Manitoba Government has been even more prompt in declaring its determination to make no change or modification in its present school system. As the latter Government will, in all probability, follow its former course in declining to be represented by counsel before the Federal Government; it is likely that Mr. Ewart and his associates, if he has any, will have the field all to themselves before the Privy Council. It would be useless to speculate upon the result, further than to say that, as it is almost certain, from various indications, that the Government will feel themselves bound to give the redress which the higher court has declared due, in some form, and as it is hardly possible to conceive of a form which such redress could take which would not be deemed by Manitoba an infringement upon her rights as a Province whose legislation in the matter has been declared to be *intra vires*, a struggle seems inevitable. Very much will, of course, depend upon the attitude of the Liberal Opposition, and this, under the circumstances, cannot be known or guessed until that of the Government has been announced.

The University Trouble.

Since we last commented on the unfortunate state of things at the Provincial University matters have grown worse instead of better. Professor Dale's remarkable letter published in the *Globe* has led very naturally to the dismissal of that gentleman from his professorship, and this action, in its turn, to the adoption of the "strike" tactics by a very large number of students. The immediate result is that the work of