

# THE WEEK:

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### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

AT Regina the Governor-General has been received with an address praying for the representation of the Territories in Parliament. "We are here," say the framers of the address, "in the North-West, laying the foundation for British institutions under wholly new conditions, not thoroughly understood outside, nor until lately fully understood by ourselves; nor can the laws be brought into harmony with those conditions, nor due provision be made for education and other needs, until after we shall have representation in the Dominion Parliament and such self-government as is enjoyed in other parts of the Dominion." The *Regina Leader* puts this demand into a practical shape by suggesting for Assiniboia five Members of the House of Commons and three Senators, for Alberta and the Saskatchewan two Members and one Senator apiece. The *Leader* also puts forth a list of particular reforms, the most important of which are a reduction of the price of Government land and an increase of the subsidy. But the list does not include either of the two articles which we should have thought would be regarded as the most essential of all—the abolition of the protective tariff and freedom of railway development. Not till the people of the North-West are allowed to have access to their natural markets, and to open up their country in the best way, can they enjoy their full measure of prosperity. Instead of asking for an increased subsidy from the Dominion, we cannot help thinking that they had better press their claims for an administration of their own lands in their own interest. That the legal ownership of the lands is in the Dominion is a fact of which we cannot entertain a doubt, all arguments about the devolution of the title through the Hudson Bay Company notwithstanding; and the Dominion has a right in the first place to repay itself all charges, in which, however, we do not include the cost of political sections of railway rendering no special service to the North-West. But otherwise we hold that the Dominion is morally bound to administer the fund in the interest of the communities, and especially to employ it in aid of the construction of railways, without which the most fruitful prairie is worth no more than so much sand. To the motion for representation at Ottawa a rider must be

added depending for its execution on the settlers themselves. They must choose as their representatives men of such character and substance as to be above sinister influence. Otherwise, if they had a hundred Members and Senators instead of the thirteen proposed, the only result would be that within a month from the arrival of the delegation at Ottawa there would be a hundred more ducks quacking in the Government decoy.

SYMPATHY for Riel and the superstitious dislike or fatalistic neglect of vaccination which has bred a plague of small-pox are not directly connected with each other; but both are French and have alike awakened the antagonism between French and British. It is curious to hear frantic calls for the military from quarters in which a few months ago we were being fiercely abused for believing that the antagonism existed. Riel will pass off the scene, the small-pox will be subdued, but the feeling of race will remain. New France is a separate nation from British Canada; the fact is becoming daily more evident. Had the British conqueror used the extreme rights of conquest, the number of French Colonists being then so small, the French language might have been suppressed and Quebec might have been turned into a British Province. Had the British race on this continent remained united, the same result might have been brought about in a milder way by the assimilating forces of the great mass acting upon a small element of alien population in the midst of it. But an end was put to this possibility by the unhappy schism in the race which followed the American Revolution. Perhaps, when the union of the two Provinces was recommended by Lord Durham, the hope of Anglicizing the French Province had not been entirely resigned; now, however, it is totally extinct. We need not say a harsh word or admit an unkind thought with regard to our French partners in Confederation; their character, their religion, their tastes and habits, their objects of pursuit, differ from ours, as do their origin and language, but are not on that account to be disparaged. If they are less progressive than we are, and have a lower standard of material well-being, perhaps they are not less happy. Their manners are courteous and attractive; their morality, if somewhat ecclesiastical, is pure. Our social relations with them have hitherto been, and it is to be hoped will always be, kind; but it is hardly possible to believe that we and they can ever be one nation. The representatives of British Canada and New France may sit in the same Parliament, but they will act in different interests, as we have already too good reason to know. Fusion is out of the question; it becomes more hopeless every hour. The case of England and Scotland has been cited as a proof that national prejudices, however strong, may in time die away and give place to a cordial union. But in that case there was no difference of language, no fundamental difference of religion or of blood, nothing to keep alive antagonism when once the political barrier had been removed. Population circulates freely and intermarriage goes on from the Land's End to John of Groat's. Whatever of British population there is in Quebec is being rapidly swamped or shouldered out, while the connection of New France with its mother country, to which in the case of Scotland there was no parallel, is growing stronger every day. Could the statesmen of 1838 have foreseen the course of events, they would scarcely have proposed wedlock in which there could be no real union. For us Confederation means, and is likely more and more to mean, subjection to the solid vote of Quebec. Quarrel with the French-Canadians it is to be hoped we never shall; but it is quite possible that on both sides the conviction may some day prevail that it is best to part in peace.

THE Hon. John X. Merriman, whose lecture on the Formation of a Nation we have received, is one of the leading public men of the Cape Colony, and his lecture shows that with political ability he combines generous aspirations, high culture and literary power. His theme is Imperial Federation, and he, too, is evidently impressed with the conviction that a crisis has arrived, and that some great thing must be done. But what this great thing is to be he, like some other eminent persons, finds it difficult to say. One definite proposal he makes. He would have the Colonies contribute to the expense of the Imperial navy. What may