

THE WEEK:

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

LORD LANSDOWNE is cordially welcomed to the hospitalities of Toronto by all classes of her citizens. He has so far discharged his duties as Governor-General with simplicity, dignity, and good sense. A man of genuine ability makes his superiority felt even in the execution of a somewhat formal task. Our thanks are due to Lord Lansdowne, not only for the gracious and appropriate things which he has said, but for his abstinence from that fulsome flattery in which men inferior to him in character and wisdom have indulged, and which at once degrades and corrupts us. It seems hardly too much to hope that such a Governor-General may use his eyes as well as his tongue, that he may observe us carefully and on his return to England tell the simple truth. The simple truth will not be discreditable to us, and he who tells it will be our real benefactor. In the meantime, we once more unite with the rest of the community in heartily welcoming him and Lady Lansdowne to Toronto.

THE Canadian Contingent for Egypt—four hundred seems to be the true number—has, as we anticipated, been made up. Many refusals were met, and withdrawals after promise had been made were not uncommon in Quebec. The French press of that Province hesitated to advise a favourable response to Lord Wolseley's call for Canadian boatmen. What weighed most with many, who would otherwise have joined the recruits, was the consideration that, if the Canadians engaged in this expedition got wounded, they would not, like British soldiers, be entitled to rank on the pension list. Though the number of men required has been got, it is very improbable that they are all expert boatmen. We suspect there are among them landsmen who are intent on nothing so much as a holiday excursion. If the right men had been secured, their skill would have been beyond question; but that they would not have been the best men to retain their vigour in the Egyptian climate is equally certain. Raftsmen from the Ganges, who would have been well suited to the kind of work required of boatmen in the cataracts of the Nile, would have had to undergo a less change of climate than the Canadian recruits; they would have had a less distance to travel, and would have been content with less pay. Caughnawaga Indians, many of whom spend their time in making and peddling trinkets, objected to forty dollars a month as insufficient pay. The half hundred of them finally got may have a special familiarity with the Lachine Rapids, but of the cataracts of the Nile they now hear for the first time: the rest of the recruits can have no more special knowledge of the sinuosities and

intricacies of waters which they have never seen. All cataracts have their secrets, which only experience can unlock. An Indian canoeman could bring you safely down the rapids of the Ste. Marie, at the entrance of Lake Superior; but a good boatman, who had no special knowledge of how to direct the canoe in the "shoot" would be likely to miss his aim and drown both himself and his passenger. Egyptians, whom it would have been possible to engage for the ascent of the Nile, ought to know their own waters better than any stranger, who has never seen the Nile before, could possibly know it. Though the men enlisted will ship for Alexandria, it has already become a question whether the Nile route, in the present condition of the falling waters, will be found practicable. The final decision, at the last moment, may be against making the attempt. That Lord Wolseley has decided on an expedition by the Nile, the practicability of which is doubted before a start is made, may show that the General, who has hitherto had success for his companion, has this time barely escaped the consequences of a serious mistake.

FOR the first time in the history of her Colonial dependencies, England has been asked to abandon the rule that no Colony shall make trading arrangements which discriminate against the Mother Country. The request is made on behalf of three of the West India Islands—Jamaica, Trinidad and Demerara. Until recently, the standing instructions to the governors-general of Canada contained a mandatory clause by which these functionaries were forbidden to give the Royal Assent to any Bill creating discriminating duties. Discrimination in favour of England was not less permissible than discrimination against her: the one would contradict what remained of the old theory of the Colonial policy, the other might interfere with England's treaty engagements with foreign countries. But of the original Colonial policy scarcely a shred now remains. The reciprocity of monopolies and special privileges is at an end. The West Indies are not allowed the benefit of the most-favoured-nation clause of the commercial treaty between the United States and Great Britain. This interpretation does not accord with that which England has put upon this instrument; but England does not feel her ground to be so firm that she can insist upon the opposite opinion. This is not the first time that the two nations have had a similar difference arising out of treaty obligations in respect of the West India trade. Upon a question of interpretation, the United States was formerly refused a participation which it claimed in the trade of the West Indies. It is now the turn of the United States to insist on the restrictive view which, under another treaty, it once fell to England to enforce. The United States Government states its willingness to enter into a treaty which would give the West Indies what they desire. The claim which these islands make to commercial independence is the cry of the drowning man for help. From the depths of commercial despair they ask, as a means of salvation, to be allowed to make with the United States an arrangement by which they would discriminate against England. When the request is made, the Colonial Secretary holds his breath. He does not meet the delegates with a distinct denial; he does not even intimate ultimate refusal: he contents himself with saying that he cannot then give an answer. There can scarcely be a doubt that, as an alternative, or rather as an apparent means of getting rid of the difficulty, the Colonial Office will urge the West Indies to join their fortunes to Canada. During the conference with the Colonial delegates, Lord Derby twice started the question of union with Canada, to which he plainly stated the Imperial Government had no objection. All this can only mean that the Government is anxious to see brought about an union that would postpone the reply which the Colonial Office is now required to make. But the postponement would not be the solution of the question; and if commercial independence were again asked, with the united voice of Canada and the West Indies, the question could neither be put aside nor postponed.

SIR JOHN MACDONALD, whatever else may be said of him, has not subjected himself to the reproach of appointing to the Bench, from party motives, men who would do discredit to the position. Weak appointments he has sometimes been obliged to make, and the choice of material is