

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

Mr Sifton in
Toronto

The Attorney General of the Province of Manitoba was warmly greeted by over three thousand people in the Massey Music Hall on Wednesday night last. In an address of welcome read by Mr. J. K. Macdonald, the distinguished visitor was assured that the immense assembly present believed that his cause was just and right, and that implicit confidence was felt in the wisdom of Manitoba to manage her own affairs. The Chairman, Chancellor Burwash, made a short and effective speech, after which Mr. Sifton addressed the meeting. That the great audience was in the closest sympathy with the speaker there could be no doubt. Both he and Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, who also spoke, were listened to with that intensity of attention which is manifested only when the hearts of the people are moved.

The Debate
on the Address.

The preliminary skirmish between the opposing forces, known as "The Debate on the Address" came to a close on Tuesday. As usual the speeches on both sides were largely after the models with which most of us became familiar in the debating clubs of our school-boy days when what was deemed a sharp personal hit won more applause than half-a-dozen sound arguments. Much fault was found with the Government for the lateness of the session, and it is doubtful whether the reasons given were wholly satisfactory even to the majority of their own followers. The large deficit afforded to the speakers of the Opposition a store of ammunition which was mercilessly used. Much wit was expended upon the alleged differences of opinion in the Cabinet, and so forth. These oratorical duels are amusing, and were carried on for the most part with good nature, but they can hardly be said to be either convincing or edifying. The leaders in the Commons by mutual consent reserved the Manitoba School Question for later use, though in the closing hours of the debate forcible and effective speeches were made in regard to certain of its features, on the one side by Mr. McCarthy, on the other by Mr. Costigan. Probably the most important contribution to the debate was that made by the Premier in the Senate. Sir Mackenzie addresses himself mainly to the Manitoba question. His speech was grave, earnest, and frank, and in a certain sense logical. Whether it was conclusive depends, we suppose, largely upon the mental attitude of the listener or reader, and still more upon the validity of its assumed premises. These premises cover much debatable ground as we shall no doubt see later.

The Newfoundland
Question.

Curiosity, as well as hope, is naturally excited by the ministerial announcement in the Commons that legislation will shortly be introduced in the Newfoundland Legislature which will, it is believed, settle the French Shore difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. If it is in the power of the Island to settle the difficulty by her own legislation, without sacrifice of any important right or privilege, and if this has been in her power all along, it is difficult to see how her politicians can escape severe censure for having so long withheld such legislation. And yet past events have sometimes given some ground for a shrewd suspicion that such may have been the case—that the Islanders in their very natural desire to be masters of their own territory and resources, or rather of those which they deem should be geographically theirs, may have failed to look the situation created and perpetuated by treaties to which, however short-sighted and exasperating, the good faith of the British Empire was pledged, fairly in the face. The firm, almost harsh manner in which the Mother Country has from time to time interfered to enforce what she regarded as treaty obligations against the contentions of her own colonists in Newfoundland gives not a little colour to such a suspicion. There is naturally, no doubt, a temptation to the colonies to insist upon their real or fancied rights in an extreme and sometimes aggressive manner, since the brunt of the struggle will fall upon the Mother Country, in whose resources and powers they have unlimited faith. Even Canada may sometimes have been troublesome in that way. We are not sure that young people, especially Western peoples, are impatient of the slow processes of diplomacy, while it may be that, on the other hand, not little strength of conviction is required to enable the Imperial Government to observe scrupulously her treaty obligations rather than give way to the importunities of her rasher colonists. Newfoundland's proposed action in the matter will be looked for with deep interest.

The Copyright
Question.

The announcement made in the Commons touching the present stage of the Copyright Bill suggests the question whether there may not yet be found need for some judicial committee of some Imperial Council of the great British and Colonial Empire to settle the constitutionality of measures proposed by the Canadian Parliament and objected to by that of Great Britain. Mr. Foster informs Parliament that the British Government has not yet taken the necessary preliminary step of denouncing, so far as Canada is concerned, the Berne Copyright Convention, and that the Colonial Office has just now requested that some representative of the Canadian Government be sent to confer with it in regard to the Canadian Bill. When we consider the length of time which has already elapsed since the Bill was referred, by consent of the Canadian Government, for the approval of the Home Government, it will be seen that the process is so remarkably slow that the delay might, in many cases, be equivalent to a defeat of the object aimed at by a bill so disposed of. There is, undoubtedly, a good deal of force in the objections which have been urged against some of the provisions of the