

# THE WEEK.

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## Contents.

	PAGE
CURRENT TOPICS.....	267
LEADERS—	
A Trade Revolution.....	270
Canadian Nationality and Resources.....	271
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES—	
My Cycling Experiences.....	<i>B. McCrea</i> 272
A Parson's Ponderings Concerning Professor Drummond.....	<i>Rev. Geo. J. Loug, D.D.</i> 274
Genius: in Science, Literature, and Art.....	<i>A. Kirkwood, M.A.</i> 275
MISCELLANEOUS—	
The Latest News From Paris.....	<i>Z.</i> 276
POETRY—	
The Land of Wood and Water.....	<i>J. Cardor Bell</i> 272
The Chickiebirds.....	<i>Alchemist</i> 274
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—	
Erasmus.....	<i>Eranucical</i> 277
Erasmus.....	<i>Rev. Herbert Symonds, M.A.</i> 278
Modern Manners.....	<i>Grundtvig</i> 278
BOOKS—	
Recent Fiction.....	278
Briefer Notices.....	279
DEPARTMENTS—	
Periodicals.....	280
Literary.....	280
Music and the Drama.....	281
Art Notes.....	281
Personal.....	282

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## Current Topics.

### The Young Conservative Meeting

Sir Mackenzie Bowell's first appearance in Toronto at a political gathering was at the opening of the Young Conservative Club rooms last week. The venerable Premier contented himself with saying a few graceful things to his supporters, leaving the speech of the evening to his colleague, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. The latter was, as usual, quite equal to the occasion. His address was an electioneering speech, of course—in view of the impending appeal to the people, it could not be otherwise—but it was a very good one. As Minister of Justice, should his party be returned to power after the coming election, Sir Charles Hibbert will have a good chance to distinguish himself. Young, courageous, fluent, and able, he can hardly fail to make his mark deep on Canadian political history.

### Mr. Laurier on the Manitoba School Question.

Mr. Laurier, in his Massey Hall speech—which was, in our opinion, the ablest public address he has yet made—re-asserted his now familiar dictum on the Manitoba School Question. His position is simply this: If the Manitoba schools, as constituted under the existing Act, are Protestant schools, it is an injustice and outrage to compel Roman Catholic parents to send their children to such schools. Every fair-minded Canadian, Protestant or Roman Catholic, must assent to this proposition. But, simple though it seems, it really gives no promise of help in solving the problem. Were Mr. Laurier's party in power, under his Premiership, and were they to attempt to meet the difficulty on this basis, they would be obliged, first of all, to settle the very difficult question, what constitutes a Protestant school? If the Bible were read, or an undenominational prayer offered, would not that fact mark the schools as Protestant, according to Roman Catholic principles? If, on the other hand, they were made

strictly secular, would not their very secularism be regarded as a species, or at least an outcome, of Protestantism, as being antithetic to the principles of Catholicism? But waiving this fundamental question, Mr. Laurier, as a good Roman Catholic must know that no system of schools the ingenuity of man can devise would satisfy the views of Roman Catholics, unless under the control of the "Church." What they demand, as an act of alleged justice, and as alone satisfying their conscientious scruples, is for Roman Catholic children a system of schools in which the dogmas of Catholicism shall be distinctly taught, and the ritual of that Church to a greater or less degree followed, under the direction of the accredited teachers of the Church. A fair inference from Mr. Laurier's words would seem to be that he would not hold his co-religionists entitled to such schools, as state-supported schools. Is that his meaning? If so, he would probably find it easy to compromise with Protestants. But would he not be repudiated by his own fellow-churchmen?

### The Copyright Question.

It is re-assuring to find the Canadian Premier and his Minister of Justice speaking out so clearly and strongly as they did in reply to an influential deputation which waited on them a few days ago, in this city, on the subject of the right of Canada to make and carry out her own copyright legislation. As we have before had occasion to say, the question is no longer one of the justice or injustice of the particular act in question, but the far broader and more important one of Canadian self-government under the B.N.A. Act. To be constitutionally granted the right to govern ourselves in regard to a certain class of subjects, and then to have our legislation in regard to one of these subjects obstructed and made of no effect by the action or inaction of the Home Government, is, as the Minister of Justice boldly intimated, to raise the larger question whether we have responsible Government, or whether the B.N.A. Act is so much waste paper. The Premier admits, however, that the Government has promised long ago that the Canadian Act shall not be put in operation until the whole matter has had the fullest consideration in the Colonial Office. This is not very hopeful, especially in view of the length of time which has already elapsed since the Act was submitted for such consideration. How many more years may be consumed in the process of consideration? It is a pity that such a promise was given without some time-limit having been agreed on, within which the fullest consideration should be given.

### The Quebec Parish Case.

In the Province of Quebec the ecclesiastical parishes are parishes for civil purposes also. A recent judgment of the Imperial Privy Council has confirmed the claim of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, to the right to rearrange parish boundaries practically as they please. In 1890, parts of two adjoining parishes in the diocese of Montreal were detached from their original connections and united with each other to form a new parish. Application was made to the Superior Court of the district to stop the pro-