

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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## CURRENT TOPICS.

Among the many philanthropic institutions of the city there are perhaps none which should appeal more powerfully to the sympathy and generosity of the thoughtful than the News-Boys' Lodging and Industrial Home. The object of this institution is to provide a home, not only for the news-boys of the city, but also for the waifs and strays, who have nowhere to lay their heads at night. During January last, the Board of Management informs us, the Home provided no less than 806 beds and 2,418 meals for such lads, and we believe that in February and in March the numbers were but slightly if at all smaller. It is to be borne in mind, too, that the object of the Home is not only to look after the physical wants of these poor friendless boys, but that it strives also to win them from the paths of vice, towards which in many cases they are swiftly tending, to better and higher lives, by means of

right influences and suitable religious instruction. Of course money is indispensable for the carrying on of this good work, and the earnest appeal of the managers will not, we are sure, be made in vain to the readers of THE WEEK. If a few—this is our remark, not theirs—are ready to devote time, energy, and personal effort to the accomplishment of so noble a work, the many ought to be more than willing to supply them with all necessary funds, that that work may be made as efficient and comprehensive as possible. All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by Mr. William Gillespie, Jr., 13 Toronto Street, the Treasurer of the News-Boys' Home.

We are glad that Dr. Weldon is re-introducing his bill for the curtailment of corrupt practices in elections. Those who earnestly desire the purification of our political methods, will, irrespective of party predilections, watch with a feeling deeper than curiosity to see what is done with this bill. Its provisions are simple and straightforward, and seemingly well adapted to promote the object in view. Its main features are described as follows:

Within sixty days after an election, twenty-five electors may petition the court, stating that they have good reason to believe that bribery has extensively prevailed at the election. On receipt of this petition, a judge will be assigned to hold an enquiry for the purpose of ascertaining by the usual machinery of justice what voters have received bribes. The names of these voters will then be reported to the Secretary of State, who will direct the revising officer of the district affected to strike these names from the voters list for seven years.

Other points are matters of detail. No doubt there is room for amendment, but the character of any amendments proposed should be carefully studied with a view to ascertain whether they are intended to improve, or to weaken and destroy the bill. One hopeful circumstance is the fact that this measure, being introduced by a Conservative, may naturally be expected to gain considerable support from that side of the House, while it is so directly in line with what the Liberals are continually advocating that it is hard to see how it can fail to gain their support. To our own thinking, the penalty prescribed is quite too mild. The act of giving or receiving a bribe is surely a most serious crime against the State. Nothing short of a term of imprisonment can brand it with the infamy it deserves, or educate the public conscience

to regard it in its true light. But perhaps the milder measure is better adapted to succeed in the present weak state of the electoral conscience.

Should the French Treaty be ratified by the Canadian Parliament, it is to be hoped that no misunderstanding will arise out of the failure of the latter to give the proposed subsidy in aid of a direct steamship line to France. It is obvious, of course, that nothing touching the establishment of such a line appears in the Treaty, and that a mere matter of domestic policy could not, with due regard to our national self-respect, be made a matter of treaty engagement with a foreign country. But it is no less true that, the intention of the Government having been distinctly and repeatedly mentioned by the British Ambassador and the Canadian High Commissioner in the course of the preliminary negotiations, it would be only natural should the establishment of such a direct line have been in the minds of the representatives of France as an influential consideration in framing and accepting the Treaty. If this were the case, the failure to carry out the former intention of our Government in regard to the matter might easily and almost necessarily come to be regarded as a virtual breach of faith. After what occurred at Washington in connection with former negotiations, Canada cannot afford to leave the least room for any question of her perfect straightforwardness in international dealings. It is a question, therefore, whether it is not desirable that, before the subject comes up for discussion in the Commons, France should be informally communicated with in regard to the change of intention on the part of this country, in order that she may have an opportunity to say whether the expectation of such a subsidized line had any influence with her representatives in concluding the treaty negotiations. Her distinct disclaimer of any such understanding would settle the question and forestall another undesirable discussion of a matter which ought not to be deemed discussible.

Quite a struggle took place in the Commons the other day on the question of administering the oath to witnesses summoned before the Public Accounts Committee. The Opposition members of the Committee strenuously maintained that the precedent set in 1892, when the House empowered the Committee to administer