

THE WEEK.

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

WHATEVER may be the direct outcome of the great agitation aroused by the Jesuits' Estates Act, which as yet shows no sign of abatement, one indirect result of great value bids fair to follow. The blind allegiance to party which has so long divided the whole voting population of the country into two great armies, each bound to follow at all hazard whithersoever its chiefs might lead, is being shaken as it was never shaken before. An illustration of the conflict between lingering party loyalty and the desire to further the new movement is afforded in the eagerness with which it is sought by some of the agitators to press the agitation into the service of overthrowing Mr. Mowat's administration, and the anxiety no less strong manifested by others to shield that administration from any possible harm. Considerable advance in the direction of rising above mere party politics has certainly been made, but the majority will need to become much more thoroughly in earnest, before they will be prepared to go whither their convictions may carry them, regardless of the effect upon the old party organizations. There can be no doubt, one would suppose, in the mind of any unprejudiced thinker that Mr. Mowat's Government made a serious mistake, and played directly into the hands of the Ecclesiastics, who are the real managers of the Separate Schools, when they consented to the changes in the Separate School Law, which were made in 1886. Under the old order of things which certainly seems to be the natural order, the taxpayer was assumed to be a Public School supporter unless and until he declared his preference for a Separate School. As the law now stands every Roman Catholic parent is assumed to be a Separate School supporter, unless and until he declares the contrary, and asks to be classed among Public School supporters. The change

can be defended on no broad principle. It is clearly adapted to strengthen and encourage the Separate Schools at the expense of the Public Schools. This no Government has a right to do. How much better it would be for all who disapprove this change, which to many minds must seem more mischievous than the Jesuits' Estates Act itself, to frankly condemn it, thus compelling Mr. Mowat to repeal the obnoxious clause, and restore the Public Schools to their old footing.

AS a means of arousing popular enthusiasm with a view to definite action along some specific line, such demonstrations as that of Monday evening at the Granite Rink in this city are, no doubt, effective. For the impartial discussion of a difficult question of justice or public policy they are manifestly of little worth. Speakers and hearers are, as a rule, all on one side. No unprejudiced mind desirous of weighing fairly the merits of the controversy could hear or read such a speech as that of Mr. McCarthy, for instance, without earnestly echoing the speaker's own wish that Sir John Thompson had been there to answer for himself. Where all present are of one mind the temptation to belittle the force of counter arguments is almost irresistible. We do not think that anyone who had carefully read the Parliamentary debate on the question of disallowance of the Jesuits' Estates Act, whatever his own opinions might be, could deny that the weighty considerations which influenced the action of the leading statesmen of the Dominion on both sides of politics were insufficiently presented, if they could be said to be presented at all, in the speeches at the Rink. However fully persuaded the Protestant majority may be in their own minds that the thirteen were right and all the other members of Parliament wrong, it is scarcely reasonable for them to hold that the thirteen have a monopoly of all the patriotism and other statesmanlike virtues in Parliament. And yet that seems to have been about the size of Mr. McCarthy's claim in that part of his exordium in which he accounted for the largeness of the majority vote on the ground that both parties were anxious "to prove that they were the best friends of the Lower Canadian party, governed by the hierarchy, marshalled and led to maintain power, place and pelf in the Dominion." As one aspiring to the rank of a statesman, Mr. McCarthy should have more faith in the honesty of those with whom he has been so long allied. His views of Canadian political morality are depressingly pessimistic. The public can but wonder that he has been so long in finding out his Parliamentary colleagues and coming out from among them.

THE more impartial hearers of the speeches at the Rink must have been struck with the apparent inability of the various speech-makers to put themselves in the place of the responsible Parliamentary leaders, and give their full force to the various considerations which must determine and ought to determine the action of such leaders in so important a matter. A singular instance of the tendency of popular orators, under such circumstances, to lose the judicial temper and venture on rash assertions was afforded in the speech of Rev. Dr. McMullen, who occupies the high position of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. No one can for a moment suppose that Dr. McMullen would for any consideration utter a word that he did not at the moment believe to be perfectly accurate. Would it have been too much to expect that before committing himself to an important statement on so serious an occasion, such a speaker would have taken the utmost pains to assure himself of the fact? And yet, unless grossly misreported in the *Globe*, Dr. McMullen actually told his audience that a motion for the disallowance of the New Brunswick School Act of 1871 was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 35, and that Hon. Alexander Mackenzie and Hon. Edward Blake voted for its disallowance! The facts of the case, as any one will find on reference to the journals, are that a motion offered by Mr. Dorion, that "this House regrets that His Excellency the Governor-General had not been advised to disallow the School Act of 1871, passed by the Legislature of New Brunswick," was voted down by a majority of 119 to 38, Messrs. Blake, Mackenzie, and nearly all the leading members on both sides of the House

voting in the majority. Mr. Mackenzie, it is true, moved that the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, and, if possible, of the British Privy Council, should be taken, touching the constitutionality of the Act, and his motion was carried. The result was that so far from the Act having been disallowed it went into operation, and is still in operation in New Brunswick, to the satisfaction, so far as appears, of all parties. The most noteworthy feature of the affair was that in that case, just as in the one now under discussion, the leaders of both parties, putting aside personal opinion and feeling, took their stand on the broad ground of the constitutional rights of the Province affected.

FARMERS are, naturally enough, the most uncompromising enemies of trusts and combinations. No doubt they are sometimes disposed to regret their own inability to fight fire with fire, by forming combinations and trusts amongst themselves. Occasional attempts have been made to do something of that kind, but with very indifferent success. The great number and comparative isolation of the tillers of the soil must always render concerted action on a large scale difficult, if not impossible. But a paragraph that has lately appeared in some of the papers suggests the possibility of a certain kind of farmers' combination that seems feasible enough, and might prove very greatly to their advantage. It is said to have been demonstrated that in the most fertile plains of California, by the judicious employment of machinery on a grand scale, wheat can be raised, threshed, and stored ready for shipment at a total cost of eight cents per bushel. It has for some time past been evident that the growing competition of wheat cultivated by the cheap labour of India and other eastern countries is likely at no distant day to bring down the price to a figure which will reduce the American and Canadian farmer to despair. The thought suggested is this: Seeing that in our own North-West we have all the natural conditions in soil, climate, and immeasurable stretches of level prairie, for carrying on operations on the largest scale, why should not a number of neighbouring farmers combine lands, capital, and labour to the utmost limit of reduction of cost in wheat-raising, and thus command the markets of the world? This would be precisely analogous to what has been accomplished in various manufacturing industries, with all the objectionable features of the combine omitted. Such combinations would be preferable for many obvious reasons to the accumulation of vast quantities of land in the hands of individuals or companies, with their possibilities of mischievous monopoly in the future.

WHEN the Act establishing the North-west Council in its present form was under discussion we took occasion to point out that such an Act could not satisfy the natural aspirations of the people of the Territories for any length of time. We wondered why, having gone so far, the Government did not go further and give a good measure of self-government, instead of a nondescript compound of autonomy and absolutism. We are glad to note that a large advance is now to be made. Mr. Dewdney's North-west Bill falls short in only two or three important particulars of virtual local self-rule. It is understood to confer on the Council most of the powers of a Provincial Legislature, including the right of direct taxation for territorial and municipal purposes, the establishment and tenure of territorial offices, the establishment, maintenance and management of prisons, the framing and control of municipal institutions, the bestowal of licenses of various kinds for revenue purposes, the control of property and civil rights, incorporation of companies for local purposes, administration of justice within the usual local limitations, solemnization of marriage, etc. The chief respects in which the Council or Legislature will fall short of the full status of the other Provincial Legislatures are that it cannot borrow money, manage and sell public lands, or establish asylums and hospitals. Why the last named right should be withheld will perhaps be made clear in discussion, as also whether the principle of a responsible ministry is to be introduced in lieu of the somewhat despotic powers now assigned to the Lieutenant-governor. The Bill evidently goes very far in the direction of the full measure of home rule which must be reached at an early day.