

# THE WEEK.

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## 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.

WE are glad to see that the *Manitoba Free Press* now clearly affirms the right of the people of Manitoba to "demand and insist" upon the abolition of the dual system of schools, if they are convinced that that system is not in the public interest. It is prepared to go as far in upholding the right of local self-government in purely local concerns as *THE WEEK*. So far, good. The question of the character and motives of the Greenway Government is one into which we do not propose to enter. We have no brief for the defence of that Government. We cannot forget that it resolutely and effectively solved the railway monopoly problem, and so far deserves well of the people who are reaping the benefit of that deliverance. In the future it must stand or fall by its doings. No Government can live long upon its past. The only remaining question at issue between the *Free Press* and *THE WEEK* is that of the mode in which the Government should set about the reform it has at present in hand. The *Free Press* admits that the Manitoba Legislature has power "to repeal any Act it has enacted." "It can repeal the Manitoba School Act to-morrow." But the *Free Press* thinks it would do no good to do so, seeing that the Constitution safeguards Separate Schools in the Province. Well, that is, as we have before seen, begging the question, or at least one of the questions, at issue. That the Constitution safeguards the right of appeal against their abolition we admit. That right cannot be taken away. If it is used, the constitutional issue will be tried at Ottawa, where the battle would have to be fought out in any case. Granting, for argument's sake only, that it would have been better for Manitoba to proceed in the way the *Free Press* suggests, regardless of past experience, the inevitable delays and the probability, amounting almost to certainty, that heroic measures would have had to be resorted to in the end, as in the Monopoly case, the question would still remain, whether it can be constitutionally wrong for a Government and Legislature to do that which they have a constitutional right to do. That is bringing the matter to so fine a point that we had perhaps better leave it to be decided at Ottawa or Downing street.

WHETHER the unexpected smallness of the Government majority in the first division at Ottawa was accidental or the result of a wish on the part of Government supporters to shirk the issue, is not quite clear. The former is more probable. The debate preceding the vote

seems to have been marked by the inconclusiveness of the reasoning on both sides touching the question at issue. The figures showing how trivial and insignificant is the amount of duty refunded the brewers as a drawback on exported products put in an almost ridiculous light the arguments of those members who made this drawback the basis of attack on the Government policy. But, on the other hand, it might have been retorted, we do not know whether it was or not, upon those supporters of the Government who used this argument that it was hardly worth while to continue an objectionable and apparently unfair distinction for so paltry a result. The same paltriness might also be urged as a proof of the failure of the National Policy, which was the real object of attack, to build up an export trade. A similar weakness is observable in the argument drawn from statistics to show that the farmers, in whose interests the motion was ostensibly made, import so little corn that the drawback asked for on their behalf would be practically worthless. Evidently a true test-question would be, not how much corn is now imported for stock-feeding purposes, but how much would be imported were the duty removed or offset with a drawback. The battle was clearly drawn, and the conditions were such that the combatants might have gone on to fight interminably, each valiantly defending his own position, but neither approaching the other near enough for an actual crossing of swords. The real tariff battle is yet to come.

MR. MULOCK did well, before submitting for the adoption of the Commons his formal protestation of loyalty to the British Queen and constitution, to eliminate the useless pledges with respect to the future. The men of to-day have to do with the things of to-day. Future issues may wisely be left for their descendants, who will no doubt be quite capable of dealing with them. Mr. Mulock also showed tact and good taste in the speech with which he supported his resolution, and which did much to secure its unanimous adoption. We still beg leave to doubt whether the resolution was necessary, or even expedient, but when its meaning and object were explained no loyal member of the Commons—and are they not all sworn loyalists?—could refuse to vote for it. That it will have the effect intended, in disabusing the minds of American statesmen of the notion that Canada is pining for annexation—if, indeed, there be such statesmen—may be doubted. The American politicians for whose enlightenment it was particularly intended are too much politicians to overrate the significance of such a vote. As a matter of fact, it may be doubted whether many of them take so deep an interest in the affairs of Canada, or are so desirous of securing her annexation, as some of the speeches to the resolution seem to suppose. As to the American people, there is not, so far as we are aware, any good reason for believing that the majority know or think much of Canada or of Canadian destiny. Those of them who may do so will not, as a rule, be much the wiser for the Commons' action, as their papers seem generally either not to have observed or to have ignored the resolution. But aside from all questions of fact and expediency, what seems to us most remarkable in connection with the affair was Sir John A. Macdonald's alleged hearty endorsement of the sentiment that Annexation would be preferable to Independence for Canada. This, it is true, is but a reassertion of a view which he is said to have openly expressed on a former occasion. One can but wish he had seen fit to give his reasons for so singular a preference. The belief, which he probably holds in common with many, that Canada would be unable to maintain an independent existence, does not justify it, since the worst that could befall her in making the trial would be ultimate absorption in the American Union. It would surely be less ignoble to attempt a nationality and fail after brave and strenuous effort, than to commit what Mr. Mulock well described as "political suicide," through a cowardly fear to attempt an independent career. And then is it not true that one of the strongest arguments for the present confederation, both at home and in England, was the ambition to build up a strong Canadian nation? And what is the Imperial Federation, for which some are so earnestly striving, but a movement for independence in another form, with, we venture to say, obstacles no less formidable to encounter? As we have before pointed out,

it would be but mockery on the part of Great Britain to offer her colonies partnership in a federation without first putting them in a position in which they would feel free either to accept or decline the offer. A federation, some of whose members were not free agents in entering it, would be a contradiction in terms.

HOWEVER widely we may differ from some of its statements and conclusions, Mr. Goldwin Smith's Address before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, at its recent meeting, is a most interesting and able review of the situation, and will repay careful reading by the thoughtful citizens of either Canada or the United States. The majority of such readers will, we think, agree with us that Mr. Smith seriously underestimates the diversities of social and political structure and other divisive influences which operate against the union which he regards as manifest destiny, and at the same time seriously overestimates the strength of the forces which draw in the direction of such union. We have not space to do more than suggest a careful examination of the argument from these two points of view. One fact incidentally mentioned by Mr. Smith is very suggestive. British-Canadians settled in the United States are, he admits, generally opposed to political union. Has not this fact its origin in a sentiment lying much deeper than mere resentment aroused by the flings of the American press? Is it not rooted in a fixed conviction that Canadian institutions are politically, socially and morally preferable to those of the United States? But why spend so much time and energy in the discussion of an event which it is admitted on all hands is beyond the bounds of possibility for long years to come? Why should the Canadians of to-day too curiously peer into the dim future, or be greatly anxious to know what course may be deemed best by the next or a succeeding generation? Sufficient unto the day are the difficulties and anxieties thereof. Nothing that we can do can possibly deprive the statesmen and people of twenty-five or fifty years hence of the power and the right to shape their own political destiny. Even could the advocates of Imperial Federation succeed in inducing the Canadians of the present day to take upon themselves the heavy burdens which are inseparable from partnership in the Empire, they could not possibly prevent their children or grandchildren from throwing off the yoke should it be found uncomfortable or oppressive. If, indeed, as Mr. Goldwin Smith hinted, it were true that union with the United States is Canadian destiny, or if the various tides of tendency setting in that direction are too strong to be permanently resisted, the pressure of federation in the Empire would rather hasten than retard the consummation. We may just add to these desultory references to a most important subject that, touching the Independence movement, Mr. Smith, like almost every opponent of that movement, overlooks one consideration which has a vital relation to the argument. How do these speakers and writers, while admitting the greatness of Canada's resources and potentialities, account for the fact that she has lagged so far behind her neighbour in population and material development? Did not Mr. Sol White, Mayor of Windsor—who, by the way, if the statement made the other day in the Commons may be relied on, is not correctly described as a "unionist of the most pronounced type"—touch an important point, if he said, as reported, that "the fact of Canada being a dependency of Great Britain has militated seriously against the country, in turning the tide of European emigration from Canada to the United States?" It is unnecessary, in our opinion, to emphasize the words "of Great Britain," or even to include them at all. But can any one doubt that the fact of Canada's being a dependency, while her next-door neighbour is a nation, has done more than anything else to turn the tide of European, yes, even of British emigration from her doors? Admit it, and what follows?

A NEW YORK correspondent gives us in another column an interesting *resumé* of Mr. Rives' keen and critical presentation of the Annexation and Commercial Union questions before the Nineteenth Century Club, from the point of view of an American Statesman. It may do those among us who are so sure that Cousin Jonathan is being consumed with an unquenchable passion for the absorption