

THE WEEK:

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE ovations to Mr. Mowat were not intended to place the hero in a dubious light; but the managers unwittingly did him injustice when they transformed the industrious and successful advocate into a hero, a character which Mr. Mowat himself would be the last to claim. To devote to death, without hope of resurrection, the leader of the Opposition is a piece of grim hyperbole, even though the instrument of execution is only a wish expressed on a party flag. Mr. Mowat has the thanks of the Province for the energy with which he devoted himself to her interests in the boundary suit; and a party which tempts the scoffer to scoff by calling him a hero and representing him as the victor of one half of the people in whose service he has won his laurels does him no real service.

ONTARIO has won a great law-suit in which a large extent of territory was at stake, and she is happy accordingly. Mr. Mowat, who personally took the conduct of the case as Attorney-General, is to be congratulated on his forecast not less than on his success. He is entitled to the credit of having mastered a very intricate question and advocated the claim of Ontario with ability and success. The duty of the Federal Government was different: it had to guard the interests of Canada, and to see that Ontario should get no more than her just due. At first, Ontario and the Dominion were the only parties interested in the settlement of the difference which developed into an acrimonious dispute. A third suitor, the Province of Manitoba, was added while the case was in progress. But before this took place, it had become evident that no amicable agreement between the litigants was possible. Recourse to a competent tribunal become inevitable; but what court could give a binding decision? The Federal Government, as early as 1872, proposed a reference to the Privy Council; and the objection of Ontario that the decision of that tribunal could give no guarantee of finality was well founded. The objection was finally waived, and means of confirming the decision will be found in the form of an Act of the Imperial Government. But the Privy Council has once more shown that it is not infallible. When that august body, acting on the famous precedent of the heroic Wouter Von Twiller, undertook to do battle against the Colorado beetle by force of proclamation, it made a correction in the geography of our continent by transforming the Province of Ontario into a "town"; and more recently in declaring the true western boundary of Ontario, and the true eastern boundary of Manitoba, it took no account of two Acts of the Parliament of Canada, passed in the exercise of express

authority, by which Manitoba obtains a large extent of territory on the east which the law does not give her. Will correction come with legislative confirmation? The intermediate arbitration cannot be said to have been without its uses; for the line which it traced, as the western limit of Ontario, was substantially followed by the judicial decision. If the three parties to the suit had accepted the award, ratification in some binding form would have followed. Ontario signified its willingness that the Imperial Government should not only exercise the power of ratification, but make any necessary amendments. One of the arbitrators admitted that he and his colleagues, in their anxiety to give Ontario a scientific frontier, did award less than was due to that Province on the north. The admission that the true boundary had not been declared the Federal Government regarded as marking out its line of duty. For the sake of convenience, that Government said, an award had been forced: the arbitrators had exceeded their powers, and the award was not legally or morally binding. The issue was clear; but before reference to the Privy Council was agreed upon, the two Provinces, in the capacity of excited litigants, were near coming to blows. In the disputed territory each Province had local officials and war-talking partisans. In the absence of an authoritative decision, neither litigant had an exclusive right in the disputed territory, and neither had authority of law forcibly to drive out the other. The chief reason for rejoicing over the decision is that it removes all danger of collision, and gives us a final settlement of the western boundary. Part of the northern is included, but more than half the northern boundary still remains to be defined. So far as traced, this line runs along a natural division, and the court, having drawn it some distance in the middle of the Albany River, would, if the reference had given the necessary authority, almost certainly have continued on the same watercourse as far as James' Bay. When the reference was first agreed upon, both boundaries were to be included; and the Federal Government will have to explain why, at the last moment, it so narrowed the question submitted that the decision covers only a part of the ground of the dispute. M. Mercier is not alone in thinking that the interests of Ontario and Quebec, in the northern boundary are identical; and the French politicians who once took the opposite view only showed their want of familiarity with the leading facts of the case.

THERE is reason in the complaint of the Trades and Labour Council that assisted immigration has been carried too far. It cannot be said that the number of emigrants sent to Canada has been too great. The mistake lay in selecting or accepting the wrong kinds of labour. Of artisans there is, in Ontario and Quebec, perhaps in all the old Provinces, a full supply. For any number of agriculturists likely to be obtained there is room, provided they have the means to make a new start on their own account. Agents of all kinds are the most difficult people to keep under control. Banks, insurance companies, all who employ agents, become familiar with this fact, not seldom to their cost; the emigration agent is not likely to be of all agents in the world the only one who always rigidly obeys orders. It is time he was instructed, if he has not been already, to discriminate in the selection of emigrants. Of artisans, clerks and incipient or actual paupers, enough and more than enough have come; for farmers the field is so wide that it is not likely to be filled during the life-time of the present generation.

BEFORE stopping to hear the end of the Lyman lunacy case, many persons in and about Montreal, came to the conclusion that, for all the benefit Quebec had reaped from his labours, Howard might as well never have lived. They are willing to believe that numbers of individuals, of perfectly sound mind, are there kept in confinement against their will, on the pretence that they are insane. That there is something wrong at some of the asylums the evidence makes probable. The government medical officer is not justified in taking a fee from the husband of a woman who offers his wife for incarceration. If Dr. Howard thought Mrs. Lyman insane, he was not entitled to take a fee for examining her. As a public officer he cannot serve two masters. Dr. Perrault, the resident physician, not only pronounces her sane now, but adds that she was sane when she