## WEEK: THE

A CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND LITERATURE.

Second Year. Vol. II., No. 42. Toronto, Thursday, September 17th, 1885.

\$3.00 per Annum. Single Copies, 10 cents.

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## The Week,

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, SOCIETY AND LITERATURE Edited by W. PHILIP ROBINSON.

TERMS: --- One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.00. Subscriptions payable in advance.

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

ONTARIO, more than any other Province of the Confederation except Manitoba, is dependent upon its harvest : a good or a bad harvest making all the difference between a prosperous year and the reverse. The Ontario Bureau of Industries undertakes the collection of crop statistics in a systematic way, though monthly collections during the spring and summer are necessarily incomplete. But taken in their entirety the Búreau's statistics are fuller and more reliable than any other. Winter wheat is a good crop, estimated at over twenty-four bushels to the acre, while spring wheat varies greatly in different parts of the Province : in Western Ontario the crop is "almost wholly destroyed," much of it not being worth cutting. But on the whole no certain deficiency is estimated, though in the West the Bureau reports some damage by rust, as well as by "midge and weevil." "Midge and weevil" are probably the terms used by persons reporting to the Bureau, though the weevil may be acquitted of the charge, since the reference is to the crop in the field, and the weevil only attacks the grain after it has been threshed. The Hessian fly is probably the real culprit. The loss to many farmers in the West will put them to great inconvenience, especially where their chief reliance was on spring wheat; not only will they have no wheat to sell but they will have to purchase flour for food and wheat for seed. Since the first serious devastation was made by the Hessian fly, over thirty years ago, the tendency has been to substitute spring wheat for winter wheat, on account of its greater immunity from attack; but now spring wheat in Western Ontario has suffered as much as winter wheat ever suffered in previous years. Comparative safety has been found in a greater variety of crops than was formerly grown. The value of barley rises in proportion to the brightness of the berry; when it is discoloured, as from two-thirds to four-fifths of the crop are this year, the price is seriously affected. Pale ale is a guarantee of purity; a deep colour may be derived from the use of adulterants; from discoloured barley pale ale cannot be made. In Eastern Ontario the total heat must have been below the average, for the fear is expressed that oats will not ripen before the early frosts arrive. In Western Ontario warm weather during the rest of this month will be required to ripen the grapes. Rye is reported to be a fair average crop. From

Manitoba and the North-West accounts are various. Mr. Ogilvie, the great miller, in his account of the crops passes in silence over the frost of the 24th of August. Some aver that it did little or no mischief except on the North Saskatchewan; but there is no reason to doubt that it was injuriously felt in the Qu'Appelle valley. The recurrence of summer frosts in the North-West is a discouraging incident. Two years ago, what was thought to be exceptional has now proved a regular visitor in three successive seasons, the only variation being in the greater or less damage according to the degree of ripeness at which the grain crops are overtaken by this enemy. It is not impossible that the cultivation of the country, necessarily accompanied by drainage as it will be, will have a beneficial effect on the climate.

In calling attention to the conviction of Poundmaker on very slender evidence, the intention of "Lex," whose article appeared in the last number of THE WEEK, may be credited with a desire to aid the cause of justice and humanity. While the evidence against Poundmaker which shows criminal complicity is weak, there is much to be set down to his credit. That Poundmaker was Chief of his band seems to be beyond question; but the power of the Chief after a soldiers' tent is set up in the camp practically vanishes. Before the Battle of Cut Knife Creek a soldiers' tent had been set up by the Assiniboines or Stoney Indians, after which the executive military power was exercised by the young warriors. All the witnesses agree in stating that the authority of the Chief ceases when a soldiers' tent has been raised. The "dancers" thenceforth exercised the military authority, and Grey Eyes, one of the witnesses for the defence, denies that Poundmaker was a dancer. But that he was a member of the council seems clear from the concurrent statements of Robert Jefferson, his own son-in-law, and Wesley F. Fish, and as such it is not possible to free him from all responsibility for what was done. The strongest evidence against him is that of Jefferson ; but there is nothing to indicate the presence of any malice in it. Jefferson, besides being Poundmaker's son-inlaw, believed that to him he owed his life when the other Indians had resolved upon his death. Jefferson appears in the light of an accomplice who was naturally anxious to save his own neck in preference to that of of his father-in-law, and if he is to be regarded as an accomplice who had turned Queen's evidence, his statements on material points ought to be corroborated. It is this want of corroboration on essential points that constitutes the weakness of the case for the Crown.

WHEN Delorme, a Hulf-breed messenger from Riel, arrived on the Reserve with a letter from the insurgent chief asking assistance, a council was held to take into consideration the reply to be sent. The meeting was in Poundmaker's tent, and Jefferson was called upon to act as scribe, a task which he appears to have undertaken without demur and as a matter of course. Five or six persons were present, and Jefferson says "they all had something to do with dictating the letter," though he afterwards refused to swear that Poundmaker dictated any portion of it. Still, if this witness is to be believed, Poundmaker was a consenting party; and the circumstance of the meeting being in his tent points to the fact that he was the central figure round which the council moved when the most weighty responsibility had to be shouldered. After Riel's letter had been read, Poundmaker asked one of the messengers when the Americans were coming to take possession of the railway and prevent the troops getting into the country; and the answer not being satisfactory, Poundmaker replied reproachfully, as if he felt the Indians were being led into a trap, that "they would not have risen had they known that the Americans were not coming." And he added that "he expected to have all summer to clean out the barracks." This evidence of the accomplice Jefferson is entirely inconsistent with the theory of Poundmaker's innocence. But it is given by a man who, with no ill-will towards the prisoner, had a neck of his own to save and had turned Queen's evidence as a means of saving it. Though the evidence of this man, on these points, is uncorroborated, still it is not destitute of probability. A man in Poundmaker's position would be very likely to act as he is said to have acted. But if we believe this part