

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

The Governor General.

We beg to congratulate His Excellency, the Governor-General of Canada, on the well-deserved and honourable distinction lately conferred upon him by Her Majesty the Queen. Canadians are pleased that their Governor-General is one whom his Queen delights to honour, for they regard with sincere esteem and affection Lord Aberdeen, who has ever shown himself to be animated with the single purpose of advancing what he considers the best interests of the people of the Dominion. No better proof of this feeling on the part of Canadians for the Governor-General is wanting than the splendid reception accorded to him and to Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen at the Parliament Buildings in Toronto last Monday evening. A matter for further congratulation is the brilliant success which has attended the present meeting of the National Council of Women in the welfare of which both their Excellencies are so keenly interested.

A Radical Difference.

From the fact that no announcement to the contrary has been made, it is generally inferred that the conference between His Excellency, the Governor-General, and the Premier and the Attorney-General of Manitoba, in respect to the Manitoba school difficulty, has proved fruitless. Meanwhile, representatives of the two extremes of opinion are returning to the charge, some of them with increasing vigor. Among these is Mgr. Langevin, the Archbishop of St. Boniface, who talks fervently of "rights," and "scholastic liberties," and "British fair play." Now, without going into the legal or constitutional aspects of the question, we should like to ask why it is that the representatives of the Manitoba minority, especially its clerical advocates, so persistently ignore the one consideration which constitutes the real question in the minds of all honest Protestants, viz., that what is asked on behalf of the minority is the power to teach the peculiar tenets of the Roman Catholic religion at the expense of the State. These Protestant objectors deny that there is any question whatever about giving to their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens every right and privilege in respect to the schools which they ask for themselves. Where they take issue is at the point where the teaching, for which all the citizens in common provide the funds, turns aside from what is understood as school education proper, and enters upon the sinuous and obscure paths of sectarian dogma and ritual, with which they believe the State should have nothing to do.

Whether right or wrong, the distinction is surely clear and arguable. Yet we do not remember ever to have seen this, the essential and vital point of the controversy, fairly met or even recognized by the Catholic prelates.

The Attempted Compromise.

It must be admitted that the spectacle of the Governor-General, in person, holding a series of interviews with leading members of the Executive of a Province, without the presence of his constitutional advisers, is a novel if not an unprecedented one in Canada. It does not appear, however, that there is anything, either in the Constitution, the Imperial instructions, or, in the nature of things, to prevent His Excellency from communicating with whom he will, on whatever topics he may please, so long as he neither attempts nor contemplates any Executive action save at the instance and on the responsibility of his constitutional advisers. It would be no one's business, so far as we can see, where or whence the proposed action had originated, so long as the Government made the proposed measure or policy its own. There may be, it is true, an element of danger arising from the possibility of His Excellency's advisers declining to adopt a given compromise or mode of procedure which commended itself to his own judgment and conscience. In such an event, there might be possibility of unpleasant complications with those advisers, who might suspect that an attempt was being made to supersede them by usurping their functions, contrary to the provisions of the Constitution. In the present instance it is pretty certain that not only Sir Mackenzie and his colleagues, but the whole country, would have been only too glad had he been able to agree upon the terms of a compromise which would have settled the struggle without infraction of any Constitutional principle, or the establishment of any troublesome precedent. Of this there seems at present to be no hope.

An Improbable Innovation.

One of the latest cable despatches alleges that the Imperial Government, in Cabinet Council assembled, have firmly resolved on a resolute perseverance with their bills until autumn, no matter how small may be their majorities. This coincides with the amended resolution passed on Monday, at a joint meeting of the London Liberal Radical Union and the National Liberal Club, calling upon the Government to hold an autumn session for the purpose of completing the Newcastle programme. It is not unlikely, notwithstanding any agitation for a different course which may have been promoted by certain members of the party, that this, which was known to be the policy of the Government at the beginning of the session, may have been steadfastly adhered to throughout, in spite of current rumours. It is highly improbable, however, that it means what was alleged in certain rumours which were current a few weeks ago, and may be so still, in certain political circles, to the effect that the Government intend, if beaten upon either the Welsh Disestablishment, or the Local Veto Bill, to decline to accept such a defeat as a declaration of want of confidence, such as to necessitate resignation, and to continue in office, merely asking for a vote of confidence upon their general policy. It is, of course, in the almost countless multitude of amendments to be moved in Committee, quite possible that the Government may suffer defeat on any one of a dozen or a hundred, none