

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

THE WEEK begins its twelfth year with this number. Considering the vicissitudes which beset journalistic ventures in Canada, especially of the higher kind, THE WEEK may be said to have reached a most respectable age. It has taken root in the country, and become an institution. Though, as already announced, the ownership of the paper has recently changed, its traditions will be maintained, and the original conception of its distinguished founder carried out as far as possible. THE WEEK Publishing Company is comprised of gentlemen representing both the great political parties of Canada. Its members are confined to no particular city or province. Under these conditions not only is political independence assured THE WEEK, but also a tone and an aim thoroughly national and free from all taint of sectionalism or provincialism. To make THE WEEK the best exponent of the best thought and life of the Canadian people is the chief object of the Company, and the kindly interest and good will of our people are asked to further this object.

The literary event of the week has been the publication of the memoirs of the Right Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald, G.C.B., First Prime Minister of the Dominion, by Mr. Joseph Pope. We are glad to state that this important work will be reviewed at length in an early number of THE WEEK by Principal Grant.

It will be necessary, by and by, to consider at some length the lessons of the recent election of members to the London School Board, particularly as these may concern ourselves. It will be sufficient, for the present, to note that the result can hardly be satisfactory to either party. The advocates of definite

Christian instruction are, indeed, in a majority on the Board; but they are elected by a minority of the voters. This may possibly have the effect of inducing some kind of compromise which, although not meeting the views of either party, may yet lead to a solution of this vexed question of religious education. It is easy to talk of shelving the subject; but such a subject refuses to be shelved; and there and here it is becoming evident that some reasonable solution should and may be found.

Home Rule. It appears that Mr. Edward Blake is getting to despair of Home Rule; and it will be the lasting regret of his many friends and admirers that he should have meddled with it. He was never a successful party leader in this country; but he was an important factor in our civil and political life, as well as a great lawyer. In his inmost Protestant heart he could surely have but little sympathy with a movement, which, if successful, would have the effect of putting "poor, suffering Ireland" more entirely in the power of the Papacy, which has certainly not been an unmitigated blessing to Ireland. Moreover, he could hardly have much in common with the Irish members of Parliament with whom he had to co-operate. If only Home Rule could be put off to the Greek Kalends, it would be all the better for Ireland and its people.

Boodle. We must be very careful not to assume the guilt of the three aldermen now accused of seeking bribes for voting on a particular side in the City Council. The more resolute the citizens of Toronto may be to put a stop to everything of the kind, to provide for the purity of their municipal government, the more careful must they be that suspicions or unsupported accusations are not accepted as guarantees of facts. Two of the aldermen in question have resigned their places in the Council, thereby consulting their own dignity and protesting their innocence. So far, it is oath against oath, although it will hardly be questioned that the probabilities of the case are against the accused. But this is not enough. In the interests of justice, it is much to be hoped that the matter may be thoroughly investigated, so that, on the one hand, no undeserved suspicion may attach to those who are accused, and, on the other hand, all who may hereafter think of offending in this manner may be effectually deterred.

By Press or by Jury? There is something even worse than the hasty condemnation of aldermen accused of asking for bribes; and that is the pronouncing of sentence by irresponsible newspaper men on persons accused of serious offences and crimes. Again and again some of the Toronto newspapers have not hesitated to give the name of criminal to persons only accused of crime. Rather more than three years ago a man was tried for the murder of his own daughter; and although there was not in reality a shred of evidence against him, some of the reporters had tried him and found him guilty in the most complete and summary manner. If such a thing had happened in England the offenders would certainly have been committed to prison for contempt of court. The other day the

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