

# THE WEEK.

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

"THE air is full of daggers," was a favourite expression of the prince of policemen, Fouché. Similarly it may be said of Canada that its atmosphere is full of rumours. Even those who are not on the alert for *on dits* and party dodges are brought face to face with the fact that "Canadian Independence" is in the air. It may not be that the feeling is very popular, or that it is recognized as being within the range of practical politics, but it is in the air, and the concurrent report of a Washington committee in favour of reciprocity with Canada will tend to keep the question before the public. The leading political organs have, after very mature consideration, taken sides, though for some time they fought comically shy of the matter, evidently awaiting orders. The Government, with a waning popularity, the result of their barefaced bribery policy, and eagerly on the lookout for a political battle-cry, no matter what, was in a position very similar to one in which the Duke of Wellington once found himself in Spain, when he said he could neither go forward, nor backward, nor stand still. The result of the party council, however, was evidently that "Independence" was not the watchword which would ensure them a further lease of power, and the Tories came out in favour of the *statu quo*. The reception given to Sir Richard Cartwright's deliverances on Independence and Imperial Federation by the country generally is almost in exact accord with the attitude of the Toronto Opera House meeting. It was remarked by careful observers present at that demonstration that whilst Annexation was not scouted, Imperial Federation was received as a chimera, and a liberal measure of applause was awarded to the suggestion that Canada's future might be that of an independent nation. Even that, however, did not by any means "bring down the house." The conclusion arrived at by more than one impartial observer was that Sir Richard's audience was composed of men who had not arrived at any definite conviction as to what was best for the future of the Dominion. A large proportion by their silence appeared to be utterly indifferent—were inclined either to "rest and be thankful," or to take a Micawberian view of the situation. A prominent Toronto preacher sums up the discussion by declaring Independence "impossible according to the designs of providence in Israel. Whether Grits or Tories want independence, God is mightier, and we will have to remain a part of the British Empire." In the absence of any celestial means of information, that statement is one not to be lightly disputed by the lay writer. Annexation also, the same divine thinks, can never take place, "as the destiny of Britain is the destiny of Israel, and

the destiny of the States is on a line with that of Britain." Mundane sources fail to supply any facts rebutting this point also. The Federation of all English speaking nations, another suggestion of Sir Richard Cartwright's, "is what God intended," says the reverend gentleman. "Ireland will then have her freedom as far as is essential. A world's parliament situate at Jerusalem, the centre of the world, will be established to deal with commerce in its higher forms, international laws and the like. It will be so strong that no nation will dare to run counter to it, while it will exercise a great influence over other nations and people." The prophetic preacher furthermore declared the impossibility of a small nation living, except under the wings of a large one, and then incontinently proceeded to denounce Annexation as ignominious, although the people of the United States were considered by him desirable allies of England under the Imperial Federation Scheme which, within a decade, is to usher in the political millennium of the English-speaking race.

THE Federal Government's hesitating policy in the canal tolls question is in strong contrast with the decisive manner in which they pushed through the C. P. R. loan. They strain at a gnat just after complacently swallowing a camel. The reduction of one half has acted more as an irritant to Quebecians than otherwise, a fact not to be wondered at when they see their carrying trade being done in American bottoms. The canals must be entirely freed from tolls before this state of things can be changed, and considering the vast interests affected it is difficult to understand why the Government does not at once accede to the demand almost unanimously made by the Canadian commercial world.

"THE end is not yet" to Manitoban troubles. Sir John Macdonald has not found the North-West deputation so pliable as they might have proved in his practised hands had they not left a legislature and a people indisposed to listen to half-measures. The people represented by Mr. Norquay refuse to be longer bamboozled out of their demands by the promises of an increased Provincial revenue. They insist on the right to build whatever railroads they thing necessary, including one to Hudson's Bay; demand that agricultural implements, building materials, and other necessaries shall be relieved from the burden of a heavy taxation. The unfortunate result of the policy hitherto pursued by the Premier and his creatures has been to precipitate a crisis which it will require great tact to prevent developing into something very like rebellion and disruption. The situation is tersely put by a writer on "Government in the North-West," in another column.

THERE were fourteen failures in Canada reported to Bradstreet's during the past week, as compared with twenty in the preceding week, and with seventeen, ten, and fourteen respectively, in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, and 1881. In the United States, there were 148 failures and suspensions reported to the same authority in the same period, as compared with 160, 104, and sixty seven, in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, and 1881.

THE latest escapade of the Irish Thugs has caused wide-spread consternation in the British metropolis, which seems to be the chief operating ground of the devilish disciples of O'Donovan Rossa and others of that ilk. The obtusity of the miserable poltroons who indiscriminately murder men, women and children in their insane attempt to bring about what the "Irish Nationalist Party" call "the freedom of Ireland," is only equalled by their inhumanity. Intimate association with England has failed to teach them that an English Government is the very last which should be approached with threats. The Irishman who dare step out and tell this truth to the ignorant people from whom it is assiduously concealed by leaders who wax fat on Irish discontent, will deserve well of his country, and will do more to restore prosperity and good feeling than he would be thanked for by Parnell and company. Although the ominous hints about "reprisals" thrown out by the *Standard* are very properly protested against by its London contemporaries, it is impossible not to contrast the almost phlegmatic manner in which *real* grievances have been received by Englishmen, with the bloodthirsty and hysterical proceedings accompanying the agitation against imaginary Irish wrongs.