

# THE WEEK.

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## The Week,

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### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

REPRESENTING the larger interests, public attention in the past few weeks has naturally centered in the doings of the Dominion rather than in the doings of the Ontario Parliament. With the people of the Province, however, those of the Local House ought to count for something. If the Ottawa Government are to continue to make "ducks and drakes" of Dominion interests, the Ontario administration and the Provincial Legislature may, ere long, be all in all to the Province. Should that fate overtake us, though we may not see politics broaden into statesmanship, we hope we may find party ardour in some reasonable measure governed by party discretion. The Provincial administration, though it has determined never to be brilliant, has evidently set its mind upon being safe. Affairs, it is not too much to say, are economically managed, the finances are in good shape, and though many ministerial cattle eat and are filled at the Government crib, decency is not outraged and public opinion is paid some respect. The work in committees goes on, and by the close of the session there will be the usual average of Private Bills passed, though there will be a smaller number of those of a public character. The division on the School Book Policy of the Government gave the Ministry a safer party standing, though, in view of all the facts, it is difficult to see how this was deserved. The Treasurer's railway aid scheme in relation to the surplus will no doubt meet with approval, and the Ministerial programme may speedily be expected to wind up with a salute.

THE liquor license question has been thrown in apparently inextricable confusion by a series of events of which the advocates of increased restriction have skilfully availed themselves. The validity of the Scott Act, a Dominion law, having been disputed, the matter was referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which affirmed the authority of the Dominion Parliament to pass such a law for the maintenance of peace, order, and good Government over the whole country. It was not unnatural to infer that if the Dominion Parliament could, for such a purpose, pass a stringent measure like the Scott Act it could, *a fortiori*, pass a less stringent one, like the McCarthy Act, and accordingly the latter was passed a year ago. More recently the Privy Council has decided that the Provincial license law, known as the Crooks Act, is also valid, so that there are at present two

license laws, one of which is in actual operation and the other about to be enforced. What view the Privy Council would take of the McCarthy Act if the question of its validity were referred to it is as yet a matter of opinion, and in the present state of confusion the liquor traffic and jurisdiction must remain until at least one other decision is given on the subject by the highest court of colonial jurisdiction. The point has also been raised whether the Scott Act, in requiring municipal officials to perform certain duties under threat of a heavy penalty, is not itself beyond the competence of the Dominion Parliament. This question was not raised in the previous issue over the Dominion permissive law, but an interesting situation would result from the refusal of some municipal clerk to furnish a copy of the voters' list for the purpose of voting on a Scott Act by-law.

THE news that the so-called rebels in the Soudan have received a check has been heartily welcomed. The British troops under General Graham encountered the enemy in force near Fort Baker, and after some hours' severe fighting, utterly routed them, inflicting a loss of about 1,000 as against some two dozen killed and 150 wounded on the English side. The bravery of our troops was put to a much severer test than in some recent petty wars, as the enemy fought desperately, fanatically, hurling themselves *en masse* against the Highlanders. But of course the undisciplined hordes were powerless against the squares of trained troops. Baker Pasha was wounded in the face by a shell splinter; Colonel Burnaby, on the other hand, came out of the thick of the fight uninjured. Important as the action was, the end is not yet, though the moral effect of the battle of Fort Baker will be of considerable assistance to British arms in Egypt and General Gordon in particular. The revolt must, however, soon collapse, El Madhi having no resources to fall back upon.

THE result of Mr. W. T. Marriott's appeal to his Liberal constituents in Brighton, England, after delivering a fierce attack upon the Government's policy in Egypt, and resigning his seat in order to test his supporters' opinion of his conduct—referred to in the last issue of THE WEEK—has been his re-election by some 1,300 majority; a result which seems to show that the current of public opinion is making in favour of moderate Liberalism as against Radicalism.

THE bloodthirsty "patriots" who promiscuously murder men, women and children in their absurd attempts to coerce the British Government have added yet another to the long list of crimes committed in the name of Irish independence. An infernal machine was discovered in the cloak-room of Ludgate Hill railway station on Saturday which, if it had answered the demoniacal purpose of its depositors, might have killed hundreds of innocent people. The station in question is one of the most-used in the metropolis, being centrally situated—at the foot of Ludgate Hill and Fleet street, and at the junctions of Farringdon street and New Bridge street (leading over Blackfriars Bridge to the Borough). Trains arrive and depart every two or three minutes to and from all parts of London and the suburbs, carrying large numbers of business men, as well as ladies and children travelling between the city and their suburban residences. The French Government is reported to have taken the initiative in offering assistance to discover the assassins, and so reproaches the indifference of America to the hatching of plots by cowardly ruffians in her midst. It ought not to have been necessary for the British Government to request any English-speaking nation to discourage men of the O'Donovan Rossa stamp; but it is imperative, after the official declaration that the Houses of Parliament are to be blown up, that recent outrages were aimed at the Royal family, and that the Queen's life is to be attempted.

THE commercial failures reported to Bradstreet's during the past week reached the large total of thirty-eight, an increase of five over those of the preceding seven days, one more than were reported in the corresponding week of 1883, and twenty-four more than took place in the same week in 1882. In the United States 237 failures were reported as having taken place during the week ending Friday, as against 218 in the previous week, and twenty-three less than in the same week of 1883. About 85 per cent. of last week's failures were those of small traders whose capital was under \$5,000.