

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

The Cabinet
Collapse.

On Saturday last the Bowell Administration was split asunder, no less than seven of its members simultaneously resigning, leaving only four Ministers with portfolios in the Cabinet. These four are Messrs. Costigan, Ouimet, Caron, and Daly. Those who resigned were Messrs. Tupper, Foster, Dickey, Haggart, Ives, Montague, and Wood. The country has been prepared for a political explosion for some time, but that the explosion should be such a very big one few but the best informed expected. We have every respect and sympathy for Sir Mackenzie Bowell. That his Cabinet has been at sixes and sevens since the Premiership was accepted by him is by no means all his fault. It is probable that only a Sir John Macdonald could have controlled a Cabinet composed of such diverse elements as Sir Mackenzie Bowell's has been. Be that as it may it is clear that in spite of his determination of character and strength of purpose the Premier has never quite had the upper hand, and at last the extraordinary spectacle is beheld of two Ministers being deputed by a number of other Ministers to ask their Chief to resign, and on his refusing to do so they themselves resign. And what is the cause of this amazing conduct, this unprecedented action on the part of these seven Ministers of State? The cause should be weighty, it should indeed be irresistible, to justify such action.

Nothing
Definite.

Mr. Foster's attempt on Tuesday to explain to the House the cause of these sudden and untimely resignations was both feeble and unsatisfactory. If the cause was, as stated, the incompetency of Sir Mackenzie Bowell to fulfil all the duties of Premier, the cause was as apparent to the seven Ministers six months ago as it was on Saturday last. If, as is no doubt the case, the recent bye-elections deepened their impression of Sir Mackenzie's inability to lead, they should have resigned

before the drafting of the Address and before the meeting of the House, and not have waited until their resignations would bring humiliation upon the Government, as well as embarrassment. The Premier has been very hardy used, and we are not surprised to learn that he has many active sympathizers. His adversity has been his opportunity, and he has shown himself a stronger man than we expected. It may be remarked that it was evidently not Sir Mackenzie's fault that there have been so many vacant offices and senatorships. Since he has had a free hand he has been filling them up at lightning speed. Perhaps this activity is a sign that a radical change in high places is near. Indeed yesterday it was rumoured that the Premier had placed his resignation in the hands of the Governor-General and that Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., will be called upon to form a new Administration. The results of yesterday's caucus were not known when THE WEEK went to press, and before this journal is in the hands of its readers the situation may be entirely changed. It is said that Sir Mackenzie is quite willing to serve under Sir Charles, that he desires nothing more than the smooth working of affairs in Parliament and the triumphs of his party.

Messrs.
Caron and
Montague.

Dr. Montague, ex-Minister of Agriculture, has been accused of writing two anonymous letters addressed to the Premier of Canada, accusing Sir Adolphe Caron of having accepted a bribe to promote a bill before Parliament during the session of 1894. The first was written a year ago and posted in Montreal; the second is only a few weeks old and was posted at Smith's Falls. It is said that Dr. Montague was in Montreal on the day the first letter was posted, and that he was at Smith's Falls when the second was posted. This is a curious coincidence, but is in itself of small import. The chief point is that the handwriting of both letters is the same and that experts have declared it to be that of Dr. Montague. It is only fair to Dr. Montague to say that very few, even amongst his political opponents, are disposed to give the charge any credence whatever. Dr. Montague, in declaring his entire innocence, invites a thorough investigation. This should be given at once. The matter is one of great gravity not only to the two men concerned but to the country at large.

The English
Advance in
South Africa.

The history of the English advance in South Africa is a history of a series of blunders. The Cape was captured from the Dutch in the beginning of the century. English settlement was slow for the first forty years afterwards. Then it assumed large proportions. But, as usual, where a civilized race intrudes on savage ground, there were in the meantime constant petty raids by natives on settlers and reprisals by the latter on the aborigines. When the reprisals were more than usually severe Exeter Hall raised its voice in protest, and the Government of the day did all it could to restrain the angry settlers. Some kind of a