

THE WEEK.

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THE rejection by the Senate of Mr. Kirkpatrick's Bill providing for the acceptance of the American offer of reciprocity in wrecking was not wholly unexpected. This is the first instance within a considerable period in which the Senate has ventured to oppose its opinion or will to that of the popular body on an important question. It is to be regretted that it has now seen fit to do so in a matter in which the interests, not only of property, but of humanity are to a greater or less degree involved. The fact that the measure has been brought up and fully discussed year by year in the Commons, and has steadily grown in favour until finally passed by a considerable majority, is a pretty good indication that it is one of a kind in regard to which the voice of the representative body should prevail. The suspicion that the Senate's action was approved, if not instigated, by the Government, is not likely to allay the dissatisfaction of the friends of the measure. Nor can it be denied that there are, to say the least, some grounds for the suspicion in the fact that the Premier refrained from voting on the Bill in the Commons, while the majority by which it was thrown out in the Senate was made up exclusively of those who are classed as supporters of the Government, and included the two Cabinet Ministers who have seats in the Upper House. The Senate is not, it must be admitted, very firmly rooted in the public confidence, and we can think of nothing more likely to add to its unpopularity than an act which gives colour to the charge of the Opposition that it is capable of being used by the Premier, or Government, as an agency for the defeat of Bills which they may deem it impolitic or unsafe to oppose openly in the Lower House. Nothing save time can be gained or lost by the action of the Senate in such a case, as under our democratic system the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives, is supreme and must in the end prevail.

IT must be a relief to the dwellers in Rideau Hall, as well as to the people of Canada, to learn that the Government have undertaken to secure some arrangement for limiting and fixing the annual expenditure in connection with that establishment. It cannot be otherwise than unpleasant to the Governor-General and his suite, as we are sure it is to the public generally, to have the subject of expenditures for repairs and furnishings of the viceregal residence made annually a subject of Parliamentary criticism. In so saying we have no intention of censuring the Opposition for challenging these expenditures. It is their duty to see that the money of Canadian taxpayers is not mis-spent or wasted. Perhaps it is their duty to see, too, that there is not within reach of Government officials any convenient receptacle, too high or too deep for investigation, which may be debited with missing funds not otherwise accounted for. The bills in connection with Rideau Hall have, for many years past, been sufficiently formidable to challenge close scrutiny. It will, we are sure, be a relief to all concerned to have the matter put once for all on an economical and business footing.

WHATEVER view may be taken of the result of the Commons debate on Colonel O'Brien's resolutions, calling for disallowance of the Jesuits' Estate Act, it is impossible to deny that the debate itself was of an unusually high order. Most of the speeches rose very considerably above the Ottawa Parliamentary level. Two or three of them, we may safely say, would stand the test of comparison with those of any but a very few of the best speakers in any deliberative assembly in the world. Some of the special causes which contributed to the marked superiority of matter and style which were so characteristic of this discussion are not far to seek. The subject was new on the floors of the House, not hackneyed like the trade question and most others of the topics which are ordinarily debated. Old party lines were entirely obliterated, and each speaker was therefore free to follow the dictates of his own judgment and conscience unfettered by any consideration of the past record, or present policy of the party. Above all the question was undeniably a great one, involving possible consequences serious and far-reaching to an extent which no one could gauge or foresee. As a consequence every member spoke under a sense of responsibility which lent unwonted dignity to his words. And to this it may be added, as a fact of scarcely less potency, that each speaker sought and hoped to convince. The depressing consciousness which must act as a dead weight on eloquence in the ordinary debate, that in all probability no arguments will avail to change the opinion or vote of a single hearer, was here happily absent. The orator could feel that many of those whom he was addressing were still open to conviction. This assurance was, we may well believe, a constant source of inspiration both in the preparation and in the delivery of those elaborate and able addresses.

IT would be folly, moreover, to ignore the significance of the debate and the vote which followed it. That vote is not necessarily decisive of the question. If the majority of the electors of the Dominion are convinced that the Act should be disallowed either on constitutional grounds, or on those of public policy, the thing can yet be done. The ultimate decision rests with the people, not with Parliament. But it is idle to deny that so overwhelming a negative following so masterly a debate, ought to carry and will carry very great weight. The people's representatives had ample time to consult their leading constituents, and to gauge with tolerable accuracy the popular feeling. That most of them availed themselves of the opportunity, or at least received earnest communications from their supporters in the constituencies, there can be little doubt. How then are we to interpret their action? The fact that all the members of the House, saving only thirteen, voted against Colonel O'Brien's resolution, must mean one of two things. Either public opinion in the constituencies is not, in the opinion of the members, by any means so strong in condemnation of the Act as the superficial observer might suppose; or those

members' convictions of the injustice or impolicy of disallowance of the Act are so profound as to override all other considerations, their own chances of re-election included. If the former supposition be correct, either the agitation will die for want of support, or the miscalculating members will be soon made to feel the consequences of their mistake. If the latter of the alternatives be the true one, the circumstance is most remarkable, and can hardly fail in itself to lead to a re-consideration, possibly calmer and more thorough, of the whole question, in the light of the Parliamentary debate.

THE death of Hon. John Henry Pope, Minister of Railways and Canals, removes from the Dominion Cabinet and from Canadian public life a man of unusual shrewdness, sagacity, and force of character. Mr. Pope made no pretensions to oratory, and seldom spoke at length in Parliament. He seems rather to have been one of the men formed by nature to plan and counsel, leaving it for others to advocate and defend. Beneath a somewhat impetuous and, perhaps, scarcely prepossessing exterior, he concealed rare penetration and sound judgment. There can be little doubt that he was for many years previous to his partial incapacitation through illness one of the most influential members of the Cabinet and one of the Premier's most trusty and trusted advisers. The personal as well as political relations between him and Sir John A. Macdonald were of the most intimate kind, and his death is undoubtedly felt by the latter as a sore bereavement. Of the deceased Minister it can hardly be said that his methods and influence were of the nature best adapted to raise the level and purify the atmosphere of political life. His was rather the rôle of the practical politician, the cool-headed, far-seeing general who scans the situation from the background, and directs the movements of associates and subordinates along the lines that lead most directly to success. His death will be sincerely regretted, not only by a wide circle of family friends and political allies, but also, it is believed, by many who, though political opponents, have learned through long years of parliamentary intercourse to recognize and value that which was estimable in his personal character.

WE gladly publish Mr. Blain's letter in reply to our article on Combines, and we certainly have neither motive nor disposition to give less than their full weight to the considerations he so well presents. We shall, therefore, after pointing out briefly why we still think our chief objections unanswered, leave the subject to the calm reflection of our readers. Mr. Blain graphically contrasts the devious and dishonest devices of salesmen under the old system with the straightforward business methods prevailing under the new. It might be interesting to hear from some of those who still favour or use the old competitive methods, on this point. Perhaps they would hardly plead guilty to the soft impeachment of "misrepresentation and deception." That impeachment is a very grave and far-reaching one, seeing that the great bulk of business, retail business at least, is still being done under the system thus denounced. If "misrepresentation and deception" are not the necessary outcome of that system, Mr. Blain's arguments fall to the ground. If they are its necessary and inseparable fruits, the case looks dark for the great majority of our merchants who continue to do business on competitive principles. Are they all dishonest?

MR. BLAIN frankly admits that the Grocers' Combine is a distinct interference with commercial freedom, and undertakes to justify that interference. How? By showing that restraint on commerce is a very common thing, and instancing our Customs' Tariff, Inland Revenue, Civic By-Law, and other restrictions on freedom of trade. But does not Mr. Blain see that he is ignoring the fundamental difference in principle—that which sets all these arrangements in an entirely different class, and marks them off by a broad and clear line of demarcation from the combine? In all those cases the restriction is imposed by law, and so by the voice of the nation, or the municipality; is enforced by law, and makes no discrimination against individuals. In the case of the combine the restriction is imposed by a few individuals, or a part of the community,