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NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Minister evidently mean to hurry through the business of the country with as little delay as possible. The Hon. Mr. Mackenzie laid on the table the first day of the Session the Report of the Public Works Department, and on the following day the Public Accounts, the Report of the Minister of Inland Revenue and the Trade and Navigation returns were also laid on the table. The speech too was taken into consideration on Friday and passed.

The British Parliament was opened on the 5th. The Queen's Speech alludes, among other subjects, to the continuance of peace in Europe, the Brussels and St. Petersburg conference, the suppression of the East African slave trade, the prosperity of the Colonies, and the trade of the country. Her Majesty recommends the repeal of the statutes touching the peace of Ireland and the enactment of various laws relating to sanitary affairs.

On Sunday the 31st ult., Stratford was visited by one of the most destructive conflagrations that has occurred for some time destroying property to the amount of \$150,000. We regret to learn that our contemporaries the *Stratford Beacon* and *Harold* are among the sufferers, but are glad to learn that they will soon again make their appearance, like our contemporary the *Belleville Intelligencer*, clothed in a new suit, which we hope they may be long spared to wear.

The provisions of the recent postal convention between Canada and the United States, went into operation on the first of the present month. Letters to and from Canada and the United States, will, in future, pass at the uniform rate of three cents.

It is now reported that not less than twelve patients were burned to death in the fire at the Beauport asylum.

Mr. Robertson, Provincial Treasurer, introduced his Budget in Quebec Legislative Assembly on the 2nd, in the course of which he announced that there was a surplus of \$325,000.

It has been decided to build a dock capable of containing a full sized iron clad at Esquimault, in British Columbia. The British Government has promised to pay \$250,000 toward the cost of its construction, and it is expected the Canadian Government will do the same.

Quiet is being restored at Caraquet, N.B. The troops have been withdrawn and no further apprehension is felt. A battery of artillery still remains at the court house, and will stay until after the trial of the prisoners, which takes place at the end of the month.

An enterprising Canadian has created a good deal of jealousy among American contractors who are anxious to improve the Sault Ste Marie Canal, by underbidding them. The *Oswego Times* alludes the matter as follows: "An interesting question has been submitted to the Secretary of War. There are twenty seven American bidders for the stone contract for the improvement of Sault Ste Marie Canal. The amount of the appropriation is \$300,000. The Mablehead quarry near Toledo is the lowest American bidder, who has quarries near St. Catharines, Ont. who has slightly underbid all the American bidders. The point raised is whether the Secretary of War is to construe the words of the lowest bidder to comprehend foreigners. It is claimed that the law was designed to include only American bidders, and that it is not the purpose of Congress to compel American manufacturers and American workmen to compete with Canadian and other foreigners for the material or labour on Government buildings. The Secretary of War has decided, preliminarily, that the term 'lowest bidders' includes foreigners. It would be a joke if the contract should be given to these foreigners, and the Secretary of the Treasury should then 'construe a law' so that the duties on the stone would make it very discouraging."

As it is the habit in New York to deal with everything as if it were a sensation, it is not surprising to hear that bets are already being made there as to the result of the Tilton-Beecher trial.

The American Secretary of State has furnished to the House of Representatives a detailed statement of the cost of the Modoc War. The total amount expended was a little over \$411,000. That sum was appropriated for the transportation purposes, the purchase of supplies, the equipment and payment of the men engaged in the campaign.

The project for constructing a tunnel across the English Channel is assuming a practical shape. A Boulogne correspondent says: "The Perfect of the Pas de Calais has issued an *arrete* empowering M. Michel Chevalier, his colleagues and agents, to take possession of any lands in the commune of Ferques and three adjoining communes which they may require for carrying out the works. The *arrete* further provides, that any claims for indemnity which cannot be amicably settled between the owners of property and the company's agents be referred to the Conseil de Perfection for arbitration."

Sir Edward Creasey, the historian, is about to resign the appointment of Chief Justice of Ceylon, which he has held for more than fourteen years. It is said that the precarious state of his health would render a return to Ceylon, in all likelihood, fatal.

A regular monthly line of steamers is to run henceforth from Liverpool to Port-au-Prince, Jamaica, Vera Cruz, and Brazos de Santiago. The four steamers with which the service will be conducted are new and of full power.

The auxiliary forces in the British Army are rapidly giving up their gray uniforms and adopting scarlet. When the volunteer movement began this was prohibited, but the War Office has since withdrawn the prohibition.

The British Admiralty have purchased for \$90,000 the steam whaler *Bloodhound*, with the view of sending her with the Arctic expedition.

The British Government has ordered one of the ships of the royal navy to re-survey the Suez canal.

Throughout the past year, the French troops have been largely exercised in night marching. A battalion would march at dusk to some distant point, and then, breaking up, find its way back to barracks in separate detachments, and by different routes.

The Czar has sent a note to the Prince of Montenegro, congratulating him on the amicable solution of the difficulty between his government and Turkey.

The Empress of China is reported to have committed suicide through grief at the death of her husband. The new sovereign is a child three years old.

There has been an intensely cold snap in Kansas. Twenty men were frozen to death, and it is feared that much suffering will be caused throughout the frontier counties of the State.

It would appear that there is some prospect of a compromise of the Louisiana difficulty, as the colored Lieutenant Governor, Antoine, is said to have expressed his willingness to resign in favour of Penn, the choice of the Conservatives. Kellog is to remain Governor, and the State officers will be divided among both parties.

The Spanish national troops are reported to have met with fresh successes, and the Carlists are proportionately demoralized.

Diplomacy is at work trying to discover the views of the Austrian Government as to the election of Cardinal Rauscher to the Papacy. The Government has, however, declined to interfere, fearing that it would be held responsible by Germany for the policy of the new Pope.