

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the  
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any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE City Council having decided, we think wisely, to fulfil its pledge, by referring the decision of the question of running the street cars on Sunday to the vote of the people, it now remains for every citizen who has a mind of his own to consider carefully what we have to gain and what to lose by the change proposed, and to govern himself accordingly. For our own part, while we were unwilling that the question should be settled on ecclesiastical or so-called religious grounds, believing that such interpretations of Divine law are beyond and above the sphere of any civil or political authority, we are very decidedly of opinion that the city has very much more to lose than to gain by the abolition of its present quiet, reposeful Day of Rest. It is quite unnecessary to dwell upon the necessity of stated and frequent intervals of rest for workers of all classes. That will be admitted by all. Nor will it be disputed, we think, that science and experience agree in determining that the proportion of one day's rest to six days' work is the best and wisest proportion. It remains only to be determined whether the greatest good of the greatest number can be secured better by having so far as possible the whole body of citizens observe the same day, or by distributing the Sabbaths throughout the whole week and leaving it to each individual to choose the day which suits him best. Here, again, the voices of experience and common sense will quickly decide in favour of the simultaneous rest. The advantages of thus working and resting in concert, as a rule, are so many and obvious that it would be a waste of time to argue the question. It is, in fact, the only way in which the right of the weaker classes, those to whom daily toil is a necessity and the loss of a situation a disaster, to a weekly rest, can be safeguarded. The stock arguments in favour of the Sunday car, such as the convenience of church-goers, and of those who wish to breathe the purer air of the distant parks and the suburbs, have been so fully discussed and on the whole so satisfactorily answered that we could not hope to say anything new or useful on the subject. It would be folly to attempt to deny that there are many ways in which the cars, if running on Sunday, could be legitimately used to the convenience of almost all classes of citizens. It is only as we strike a balance between the advantages that would

result on the one hand, and the hardships that would be involved for a large class of our fellow-citizens and the evils of various kinds that would inevitably follow—some of which were well suggested in one of *Grip's* cartoons the other day—on the other hand, that we are in a position to reach the right conclusion. And, having made our position clear in opposition to those who would have the sanctity of the Sabbath enforced on religious grounds by the civic authorities, we may add without danger of being misunderstood that the opportunities for quiet reading, meditation, or worship, which are afforded by the simultaneous cessation from everyday business and labour, are not the least among the many considerations which may be and should be taken into the account by all who believe in the existence of the higher nature, and who realize that the soul of man has relations to the unseen and the eternal of such a kind as to render it essential to his highest well-being that he should have frequent opportunities for serious thinking.

THERE is reason to fear lest in the multiplicity of questions to be decided by the citizens of Toronto on the fourth of January some important ones may fail to receive the consideration they merit. Among these important ones is that of free text-books in the Public Schools. We are glad to see that Inspector Hughes has called attention to some of the strong reasons in favour of the proposed innovation. Among these the pleas that the system will be found economical, will tend to increased attendance and greater regularity in attendance, will save time in the school and prevent friction between parents and teachers are, we believe, especially valid and forcible. But perhaps the strongest argument in favour of having text-books and all other descriptions of necessary school apparatus furnished free in the school rooms is that this is the logical corollary of the free school system, the principle of which is approved by all. To go to great expense in erecting school houses, providing trained teachers, etc., at the public cost, in order that no citizen need through poverty grow up in absolute illiteracy, and then to suffer hundreds of children either to be kept from the schools, or to be placed at a serious disadvantage in them, in consequence of inability to procure the necessary tools, is surely both undesirable and illogical. In fact, there is, so far as we are able to see, no argument that is valid in favour of free schools which is not equally valid in favour of free text-books, and no objection of any weight that can be urged against the latter which is not equally forcible as against the former. The position, too, of the Public School teacher is hard enough at the best, and there is no good reason why it should be made more difficult by the embarrassment and loss of time which so often result from the unwillingness or inability of parents or guardians to furnish promptly the proper text-books. The experience of those towns and cities which have tried the free system, as well as many *a priori* considerations, lead us to the conviction that if our fellow-citizens can but be induced to give the free system a fair trial, they will after a few years no more think of going back to the old method than they would now think of going back to the old plan of "hiring" teachers by subscription, at the rate of so much per pupil, and having them "board around" among their patrons.

THE situation in Quebec is peculiar and critical. The moral question and the constitutional question have become confusingly intermingled, and both are in danger of being lost sight of in the heat and fury of party strife. Lieut.-Governor Angers and his new advisers have certainly taken upon their shoulders very serious responsibilities. If they have not directly overridden the Constitution they have at least made such innovations in constitutional usage as nothing but the verdict of a great majority of the people can condone, and which even that can hardly justify save on the ground of an imperative necessity, such as has not as yet been made quite apparent. We cannot agree with those who cry out that nice constitutional usages are of comparatively little importance in the presence of great questions of public morality. The history of the growth and working of free institutions shows that the scrupulous observance of these usages is often a

matter of the first importance. In a Constitution like that of Great Britain, or that of Canada, which is its copy so far as a written constitution can be a copy of an unwritten one, there is scarcely a well-established precedent or rule which was not originally the outcome of a practical necessity, often of a long continued struggle. Such embodiments of the wisdom and experience of generations of men skilled in constitution-building and bent on perfecting a people's government and representative institutions, are not to be lightly set aside to suit the requirements, real or fancied, of a temporary exigency. We have before pointed out that the action of Lieut.-Governor Angers in dismissing his Advisers on the strength of an interim report, understood to have been prepared at his personal request, and especially his replacing them with a Cabinet chosen from the opposite party, was an act of very doubtful propriety. Munro, in his "Constitution of Canada," says: "In practice the Governor-General in appointing Privy Councillors is guided by several important constitutional rules. The members chosen are selected from that party which possesses the confidence of the Legislature, more especially of the House of Commons." Mr. Angers' subsequent act, in dissolving the Legislature without having given it an opportunity to express confidence or non-confidence in the new Administration, and under such circumstances as to involve a violation of that clause of the British North America Act which makes a session of the Legislature every year imperative, is of no less doubtful propriety and perhaps of still more doubtful legality. In view of the conflicting views of some of the best authorities on constitutional questions, it would be presumptuous in us to venture any very positive opinions on this aspect of the case. Still such questions have their common-sense as well as their legal phases. An important preliminary point, upon which we do not remember to have seen a clear opinion, touches the placing of responsibility for the dissolution. Mr. Bourinot, as quoted by the newspapers, justifies the act as an exercise of the prerogative, which, in his opinion, must override a clause of the Act which he regards as merely directory. But it is difficult to understand why such a clause should have been inserted if not expressly to guard against such use of the prerogative. Is it not the main object of constitutions to guard the rights of the people against abuses of the prerogative? Then, again, can the dissolution, if brought about in accordance with the advice of the new Cabinet, be regarded as an exercise of the prerogative? Was it not rather a violation by the Government, of the Constitution which is given them to be their guide, and which it is their first duty to observe and uphold? It can hardly be regarded as a satisfactory answer to say that the effect of the dissolution is to give the people an opportunity to express and enforce their will, seeing that that opportunity is placed at nearly three months' remove, and might, on the same principle, have been postponed for six or nine months, during which interval the country is to be ruled by a Ministry no member of which has a seat in the representative branch of the Legislature, or has received in any way the endorsement of the electors for whom he is supposed to act.

WAS this somewhat serious double wrenching of the Constitution demanded by a necessity, either political or moral, of the kind which is said to know no law? Was there no more constitutional way in which the same end could have been reached, in so far as that end is the exposure of wrong-doing and the purification of the Government? That is, we take it, one of the vital questions in the case. The method most in accordance with the precedents would have been, if we are not mistaken, for the Lieut.-Governor to have called together the House as soon as the report of the Royal Commission, which, having been formally appointed with the assent of the Government—it matters not at present under what pressure of a legitimate kind that assent was given—was regularly constituted, was ready, and to have laid that report before the Representatives of the people with the least possible delay. If that report contained a clear condemnation of the Government as dishonest and corrupt, and was supported by indubitable proofs, it is inconceivable that any body of representatives could have hesitated