

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

"The Cost of Liberty."
Principal Grant's series of articles on "The Cost and Profit of Liberty" will be resumed in our issue of December 27th. This series has attracted, as we expected, a large measure of attention throughout Canada. The Attorney-General of Nova Scotia has sent us a paper on Imperial Unity, in which he takes as his text the articles of Principal Grant. It will appear in our next number.

Mr. Wallace Resigns.
The most interesting point in the political news of the current week is the resignation of Mr. Clarke Wallace, M.P., as Controller of Customs. Mr. Wallace's decision will be received by the country, and perhaps by his own party, with mingled feelings. The announcement was made in the evening papers of Wednesday—probably too late to effect appreciably yesterday's bye-election in North Ontario, the result of which is still unknown as we go to press. The friends of Mr. Wallace ascribe his delay in resigning to the fact that "negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the controversy over the school question were pending until a few days ago. But these negotiations are now finally off, and Mr. Wallace has determined to sever his connection with the Government that is committed to a policy of coercion, and take his place among those who are fighting the battle of Manitoba." The Orange Sentinel, of yesterday, warmly congratulated Mr. Wallace on the decisive step he has taken, and pledges him its utmost support. The Sentinel adds that victory is now assured for the Prairie Province "in the struggle to maintain the little red schoolhouse." Mr. Wallace will retain his seat in Parliament and will take an active part in the Cardwell election, opposing, it is said, the Government candidate. It is hinted that he may ally himself with Mr. McCarthy. This would be a highly interesting alliance, but as Mr. Wallace says he has not as yet given any thought to his future course it is rather premature to speculate on the results of such a combination. Yesterday's papers were full of the resignation of the Controller and what various prominent men thought of his action and its results. The Liberals express surprise that he has remained in office as long as he has; the Conservatives are equally surprised that having remained till now he did not remain altogether, or at least until the Government was actually forced to take decisive steps. For our own part we consider that if Mr. Wallace had resigned when the Government first announced its intention of introducing remedial legislation the ex-Controller would have occupied a much more dignified and independent position than he does to-day.

Mr. McCarthy is Pleased.
Whilst addressing a large public meeting at Bracebridge on Wednesday evening in support of the candidature of Mr. Brandon, the standard bearer of the Patrons, Mr. D'Alton McCarthy read a telegram announcing Mr. Wallace's resignation. Mr. McCarthy expressed great pleasure at the news and withdrew certain criticisms he had previously passed upon the ex-Controller. "The air is gradually clearing," remarked the leader of the Third Party; "the crisis is approaching; the first desertion, and an important desertion it is, has taken place. If I wanted any justification for my course from the first day the Manitoba School Question was brought up on the floor of Parliament until this moment, I have got it in this telegram here to-night." Mr. McCarthy added that he could not imagine anything over which the angels would weep more than the sight of two Orange Grand Masters carrying out the behests of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Quebec.

The National Policy

It is easy to criticise a policy; it is difficult to construct one. It is still more difficult to construct one that may prove acceptable to a majority in a country of such peculiar conditions and diverse interests as the Dominion of Canada. In the National Policy the Conservatives accomplished this great task, and since its adoption by the party the Policy has more than once been confirmed by a general election. It is true that in several respects the National Policy differs from the original measure, but this is to be expected. It is essentially to-day what it was seventeen years ago. We have as yet no certain means of knowing whether or not it stands as high in popular estimation as it did. There is some reason to believe that it does not, but the Ottawa Government evidently believes it does, as the ministers are a unit in desiring it to be the chief issue of the coming elections, bye and general. They are probably in a better position to judge of the feeling of the country in the matter than their political opponents, who as yet appear to be not quite united on their tariff policy. So far as we can judge the Liberals desire a tariff for revenue only, but have no intention, if returned to power, of making any sudden change. They would, it is said, accomplish their purpose by slow and well-considered steps. But there is an element of uncertainty about this method of procedure, especially as it is known that advanced free traders will have a voice in deciding the length and the rapidity of the steps. It would be better for the Liberals to state plainly and definitely how far they intend to go and how long they expect to be in getting there. Commercial people dread the unknown and the uncertain. The National Policy may be the failure some people claim it to be, it may even be "played out" as the Liberals state, but the nation knows what it is, knows its good points and its bad, and we believe that so long as there is the present element of uncertainty about the trade policy of the Liberals they cannot hope to drive their long-installed opponents from power.