

EXPENSE OF LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES.

WE publish in another column, an extract from a letter, which appeared in the London *Standard* written by its New York correspondent, under date of April 5th. The writer is considered one of the ablest of American contributors to the London press. He draws a contrast between the prices of provisions in 1861 and as they are now in 1867, and the evidence is conclusive that a dollar in gold, to say nothing of "legal tenders," fails utterly to contain the purchasing power possessed by it in 1861. Living has become so expensive that although of some classes of labourers there is an over supply, still wages are forced up by combinations from the mere fact that without such advance the labourer would be unable to support himself and his family. People may talk as they please of the vast recuperative powers possessed by the people of the United States, of their enormous resources, of the mines of gold and of silver, of coal and of iron, of the fields of rice and plantations of cotton, the teeming prairies and the boundless forests, but let us ask what have they now to show for all these opportunities of wealth? Where are their exports, the touchstone of their prosperity? Look at their enormous imports, the measure of their needs. See the prices they pay to us Canadians for our wheat and our flour, our cattle and our lumber, and then let any one who chooses talk of the wonderful, yea boundless resources upon which our neighbours have to draw. So long as foreign peoples are willing to lend to the government of the United States, and the government spends freely at home, so long probably will the evil day be postponed. But just as soon as the United States bonds shall be exhausted, or become of ill savour abroad, and the people, hedged in as they are by a high protective tariff, are left to the profitable employment of "swapping jack-knives" amongst themselves, so soon we may look for a bursting of the soap-bubble of apparent prosperity, and a period of long continued depression in trade, and consequent suffering. It is true that abundant harvests on this continent and high markets in Europe might for a while assist in preserving the balance of trade; and even by stimulating the great interest of agriculture stave off the threatened ruin altogether, but we have not faith in the working of any miracle to open the eyes of the wilfully blind, and fear that our neighbours will learn the true teachings of political economy from very severe experience.

THE ST. LAWRENCE AND BAY OF FUNDY CANAL.

WE have just perused an abstract of an Act passed in the last session of the Nova Scotia Legislature, for incorporation of "The St. Lawrence and Bay of Fundy Canal Company." Some time ago we in a brief statement of facts, ventured to call public attention to the importance of this work with reference to Canadian trade with the rich and populous districts on the shores of the Bay of Fundy, and advocated its construction as a Government work. Since then the present company has been formed for the purpose, and the act above alluded to passed. While we should be sorry to throw any impediment in the way of the construction of this most necessary work, yet the bill itself invests the company with such extraordinary powers, that we are surprised at its passing the Nova Scotia legislature in the shape it has. It seems incredible that an act should have passed for the construction of a canal which neither provides for its width or depth, nor specifies the rate of tolls to be levied, nor whether any or what distinctions are to be made between British and foreign shipping, yet such is the literal fact. We quote from some of the sections of the Act to show the extraordinary nature of the powers conferred. The early sections are as usual taken up with matters relating to the organization of the Company, the capital of which is fixed at \$500,000 with power to increase to \$800,000, and also power to issue mortgage bonds. Section 8 relates to the construction of the canal, and provides that it may be "of such breadth, depth, and dimensions as they (the company) may deem necessary." It also gives powers to the company, "generally to use and appropriate all waters of the lakes, streams, and rivers of the said isthmus and the channels and water courses thereof, and for the use and benefit of and for rendering effectual, navigable, and useful, the said intended canal or water communication from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Bay of Fundy." Section 10 provides that the canal shall be open to all Her Majesty's sub-

jects on payment of "tolls to be established by the company." Section 15 provides "that the company may from time to time drain any marsh bog or swamp land covered with water through which the canal may run or in the vicinity; and they may flow such lands with tide water for the purpose of converting the same into productive marsh. In case the owners or occupiers of lands thus improved decline to pay the company's assessment for expenses incurred where such assessment does not exceed \$1 50 per acre, they (the owners, &c.) may appeal to the sessions where the assessment exceeds \$1 50 per acre, the company shall ask for a conference with the owners, who shall appoint one assessor, the company a second, and the custos of the county a third, and the whole or a majority of them may assess the expenses. If the owners refuse or neglect to appoint, or the assessors appointed neglect their duties, the assessor appointed by the company may make the assessment." Section 16 provides that in case any such lands cannot be let for a sufficient time to pay rates, costs, and expenses assessed, the sheriff at the request of the company may sell the same, or so much thereof as is necessary to meet these charges. Section 17 gives power to the company to appropriate any ungranted land required for the canal, as well as all that may be reclaimed or rendered productive by its construction. Section 18 provides that the company shall be exempt from all rates, taxes, and assessments until their dividends of profits on paid up capital equal the legal rate of interest. Section 19 provides that the act shall expire if effective operations under it be not commenced within five years.

From the above it will be seen that the powers conferred upon the company by this act are almost unlimited, and that the public interests are left entirely at its mercy. As some portion of the proposed canal must pass through New Brunswick, and it is intended to apply to the legislature of that Province for similar powers, we hope that it is not too late to rectify the mistake made by the Nova Scotia legislature in passing this bill. It will be too bad to convert what might be made a work of great public usefulness and importance into a pernicious monopoly. We offer these remarks in no captious spirit, but simply from a feeling that no company whatever ought to possess such absolute powers, and that they are more than likely in the long run to prove inimical to their own interests.

SEWING MACHINES.

NEXT to the steam engine and the electric telegraph the sewing machine may justly be regarded as the most remarkable invention of modern times. It has completely revolutionized a great many branches of trade, and the rapidity with which it performs its work, is not more remarkable than the wonderful range of employment to which it is capable of being applied. To use the words of an advertisement now lying before us, "it can be warranted to sew any thing from the finest muslin to shingles." To the Americans belong the merit of at least perfecting, if not of actually inventing the sewing machine, and there is probably no modern invention which has yielded more ample returns than to those who have invested their money in the various patents connected with its manufacture.

Although machines have been made in England for some years, yet it does not appear that the English machines have ever supplied the home demand, or been exported to any extent. The American manufacturers early learnt the value of the European market and the "Singer" machine, the "Wheeler & Wilson," the "Grover and Baker," and several others, soon entered into successful competition, and probably five-sixths of the vast number of machines now sold in various parts of the world are manufactured under American patents, and the chief benefits derived from the business has been by American citizens. The manufacture in the United States is now, however, encumbered with such an immense number of patents, and the cost of both material and labor so very largely increased that great inducements are offered to other countries to engage in the business; and there are probably few countries better situated for carrying it on successfully than British America. It was considerations of this nature which led a short time since to the establishment in St. John, N.B., of the "North American Manufacturing Company," which is exclusively engaged in the manufacture of sewing machines under what is known as the "Weed" patent. A hasty visit to this establishment enables us to give a short sketch, which may be both useful and interesting. The com-

pany commenced operations in February 1864, and have kept their machinery constantly running ever since. During the year 1866 they turned out 1891 machines, which were thus distributed: 1400 to Great Britain, 400 to Germany, 250 to South America, and 240 were sold in the British provinces. We understand that the demand in Germany is rapidly increasing, and that it is the intention of the managers, as soon as the customs duties shall have been removed by confederation to cultivate and seek to enlarge the home trade. Judging from the universal testimony of those who have used their machines, their can be little doubt of their doing so successfully. It is impossible to convey an accurate idea of the various ingenious processes by means of which the manufacture is carried on; they must be seen to be appreciated, but we may state that every part of the machine, from the rough castings to the shuttle, is made here, and that everything which it is possible to perform by the aid of the most delicate and ingenious machinery is here performed. The utmost care is taken in the selection of good material; the iron is all annealed in furnaces prepared for the purpose, and every machine, after being put together, is subject to the inspection of skilful workmen, whose sole business is to examine and to remedy any defect that may appear. They are then subject to a further test, by being placed on a frame prepared for the purpose, and run at full speed for several hours. If then found perfect, they are at once boxed for exportation. The present capacity of the works is equal to the production of 400 machines per month, and 50 hands are constantly employed, of which number 41 are first-class machinists. Two classes of machines are made—one for family purposes, and another of a heavier description for manufacturing uses, but the principle of motion is alike in both, and both are what are called Shuttle and Lock Machines. We were particularly struck with the order and regularity which reigns throughout the establishment, and the best possible feeling appears to exist between employers and employed. We had expected to find a majority of the workmen employed to be Americans, but the highly intelligent manager (himself an American) who accompanied us through the factory states that such is not the case, and that his experience leads him to prefer provincial workmen, as being more to be depended on. We are glad to record this fact; it is very gratifying, and is one more proof that with ordinary enterprise and facilities we need not fear competition.

WORKINGMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

THE long struggle between the two great elements of industry, capital and labor, has been going on for ages, and the efforts of statesmen and legislators have, so far, been unsuccessful in reconciling their antagonistic pretensions, or only to a very limited extent. The interest of the capitalist is to purchase labour at a low rate, while the interest of the workman is to raise the price of labour. To combine those jarring interests is a problem that has yet to be solved, if indeed it ever can be fully demonstrated. The Protectionists have attempted the feat and failed; Socialism in its manifold phases has tried it in vain, and Free Trade, that has done so much for commerce, has not yet done this. Probably the nearest approach to it is to be found in the Workingmen's Co-operative Societies, which have been in operation in England for over twenty years, and which have lately commanded a good deal of public attention in this country. As incorrect and exaggerated notions are sometimes entertained on the subject of these associations, we shall repeat here some of the leading facts connected with their history and career.

In England the Co-operative Societies are of several descriptions. 1st, the co-operative stores for the sale of provisions and other articles of common use in families. These have been formed with the view of providing the members with such articles at a low price and of good quality. The goods are bought for cash at wholesale prices, and sold also for cash, as they neither give nor take credit. The original scheme was confined to those who set the business afloat, and who were at once the proprietors and customers of the store, though each might be so in proportion to the sums invested. The profits are divided among the stockholders and those who have purchased at the store—the former receiving a dividend on their stock, and the latter a bonus on the amount of their purchases, which in some instances has reached 12 per cent. 2nd. There are the co-operative manufacturing