

the next reform for educationists, but if so, the universal adoption of the metric system seems almost a necessary stage in the reform.

We would ask those who oppose a reform of our present jumble of unrelated tables of measures why it is that starting with only one country a hundred years ago the metric system has been adopted—one after another by 44 countries of the world having an aggregate population of 80,000,000, and that not one of the countries that have adopted it has repented of the change and gone back to its former system?

As for Mr. Baillairge's argument that the change to a simpler system would throw a great many people out of employment, we presume he is taking this humorous means of showing the practical advantages of the metric system. If his line of reasoning is to be taken seriously, then we could show that the extinction of the sun would be of the greatest advantage to human industry. You have only to blot out the sun for a time and you would have an enormous increase in the electric lighting business, in coal gas and acetylene lighting plants, in all branches of the engineering trades that cater to the production of power for lighting, and in the various industries that are wholly, or even partially, dependent on them. In fact there is no limit to the manufacturing and commercial and agricultural interests that would be affected by such an event as the cessation of sunlight for say three months; and when at the end of that period the sun again flooded the earth with free light and heat, hundreds of thousands of hands would be turned out of their accustomed employment, and millions of dollars worth of machinery would be idle. But what does this analogy show? Simply that all the brains, time and money now spent in work that could be dispensed with by the metric system, is a pitiful waste; and every year's perpetuation of it only increases the ratio of waste.

SOUTH AFRICAN PREFERENTIAL TARIFF.

It will be interesting to Canadian manufacturers of all classes to know that the new preferential tariff of the South African colonies, which was planned at a customs conference in Bloemfontein last March, is now in actual operation. Under this tariff goods from Great Britain will enter Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal and Orange River Colony at a reduction of 25 per cent. from the rate under the general tariff. It is provided that a like preference will be granted to any British colonies granting reciprocal concessions. It is provided in the Canadian Preferential Tariff Act of 1897 that the preference will be given to "any British colony or possession the customs tariff of which is on the whole as favorable to Canada as the British preferential tariff [of Canada] herein referred to is to such colony or possession," so that, so far as Canada is concerned, we understand that the reciprocal preference between Canada and South Africa goes into operation automatically. This should open up a good prospect for trade in many classes of goods of Canadian make. The effect on the Canadian paper industry for instance is thus indicated by the Pulp & Paper Magazine of Canada: "As will be seen by the figures published last month, Great

Britain has the premier place in the paper imports of South Africa, but there is no reason why, under the stimulus of this new preference, Canadian papers should not displace those of other countries now occupying secondary positions in the list of paper imports. Indeed, seeing that in the case of Australia the United States has within the past five years made rapid advances in that market, while Great Britain and other countries have receded, relatively, there is really no reason why Canada should not share in some lines, the trade the Mother Country is doing in South Africa. There are at present neither paper nor pulp mills in the South African colonies, and as such an industry, even if started, is not likely to assume any dimensions for many years, the market for Canadian papers, once opened up, would be the more likely to develop."

To give an idea of the possibilities for Canadian manufacturers in general in this part of the Empire, we need only mention what our wideawake neighbors have done in recent years in South Africa. The exports of the United States to those colonies, though they have grown steadily in the last twenty-five years, did not amount to a tenth of British exports there down to the year 1897, but they expanded to one-quarter of the British exports last year, or, in round figures, \$33,000,000. When the Canadian preferential act of 1897 was promulgated, it already embraced in the scope of its operations the colonies of Bermuda, the British West Indies and British Guiana; so that if other colonies, especially Australasia, reciprocated in the matter of tariffs, the British Empire would of itself afford a wide field for papers "made in Canada."

—London Engineering calls attention to the growth of exports in industrial lines from Japan. In 1897 the exports amounted to 163 million yen, but last year the figures reached 258 million yen. Among the raw products in which there has been a large increase are copper and coal. These came into competition with British products—the other exports are for the most part goods peculiar to Japan or the East.

—Public ownership of railways, telegraphs and telephones seems to be giving satisfaction in New Zealand. The railways in 1902 earned a net interest of 3.425 per cent. on the investment. All cities own and operate their own street car lines, water, gas and electric plants, and the general results are highly favorable. The service is good, and the rates much lower than on this continent, with private ownership. The usual fare on street cars for rides within the limits of the city is one penny, and the longer rides, extending to the suburbs, are not more expensive than they are with us.

—The permanent militia force of Canada is to be increased by 500 men; of whom 200 will be divided between ordnance and engineering corps. At present there is practically no engineering force, and it is proposed to have a small section at every military depot.