

Great Britain and Europe and Northern and Western America. In the statement attributed to Mr. Van Horne it is claimed that "the steamers by the projected route would cross the Atlantic from land to land in one hour less than three days (it is well to be exact) and land passengers at Quebec in five days." From these premises it easily follows that American passengers would see the advantage of patronizing a line which would keep them but three days on the open sea, and land them in Chicago and other Western cities in twenty-four hours' less time than would be required by the New York route. The advantage to Great Britain in reaching her Indian possessions, by means of this route, in connection with the transcontinental line and Pacific steamships of the Canadian Pacific Railway are also obvious. But two or three questions of very serious importance ought to be pondered by Canadians before Government and Parliament are permitted to commit the Dominion to the payment of this enormous subsidy. The first and chief is, "Will it pay?" By this we do not mean will every dollar of the annual half-million, or whatever the amount of the subsidy may be, be returned directly to the pockets of the Canadian people. There are many cases in which it is the part of good statesmanship, as of good business management, to make outlays unremunerative for a time, with a view to future advantages. But will the sum total of advantages of every kind resulting to Canada from the diversion of the amount of travel and traffic which can reasonably be expected to result from the proposed arrangement fairly compensate her for the very large annual outlay from the taxes of her citizens? It is not quite self-evident that either the prestige of such an enterprise, or the gain to be derived incidentally from the transit of passengers and their effects across our territory, would really recoup the Dominion, however beneficially they might affect the finances of the railway. In fact, the whole steamship subsidy business is one which demands a closer investigation on its merits than it has yet received. But granting both that the subsidy system is sound in itself and that this particular application of the principle would be specially justifiable, the question of the propriety of still further increasing the powers of this huge railway corporation, which has already so strong a hold upon Government and Parliament and people, is one demanding the most careful consideration. We are free to admit that the energy and enterprise of this Company command both admiration of its management and confidence in its resources. But, however meritorious and trustworthy the Company as at present constituted, it should be remembered that individuals die, but great corporations live from generation to generation. A management might arise at any time which would be hampered by no scruples and would recognize no ends but those of self-enrichment and self-aggrandizement. The power for evil of such an institution in such hands would be enormous. Of course the mere bestowment of an annual subsidy for a limited period could not greatly increase the danger, for it would remain in the power of Parliament to withhold it at any time after the expiration of the stipulated period. But if the contemplated scheme involved, as has been hinted, any such thing as the transfer of the ownership of the Intercolonial Railway, such a condition should not be entertained for a moment, unless the people are willing to face the possibility of having this great railway company become the real rulers of the country.

THOSE who object to the whole system of protective duties on the ground that it is unjust and oppressive to the farmers and other general consumers to compel them to pay enhanced prices for articles of comfort or necessity in the interests of a few manufacturers are often met with an argument from statistics, something after this fashion. The whole cost of the imported dutiable articles which are used or need be used by the average family does not exceed a certain very limited sum, say fifty dollars a year, and the amount of duty upon goods to this value, at the rate of twenty-five or thirty per cent., is but a small sum to pay for the encouragement of home industries. It might be deemed a sufficient answer to say that neither the political nor the moral quality of an injustice depends upon the amount of the unjust exaction. It is as real a violation of the equal rights of citizens, from the point of view of abstract justice, to transfer by law from the pocket of one citizen to another ten cents as ten dollars. But the crucial fallacy of the argument lies in its tacit assumption that the pocket of the consumer is

affected only to the extent of the sum he pays by way of duty upon the imported dutiable articles he buys. No account is taken of the tribute he pays to the protected manufacturer in the shape of the enhanced prices, or the comparative inferiority or unsuitability of the articles of home manufacture which he is constrained to purchase, whereas it is in this indirect way that the major part of the tribute is usually exacted. When this is pointed out, one is met with the reply that the home-made product is really quite as good and as cheap as that of foreign manufacture, if not better and cheaper. The obvious rejoinder then is, what need of protection? Is it to be assumed that the great majority of Canadian consumers are so prejudiced, or so unpatriotic, that they will, unless prevented by acts of Parliament and armies of custom officers, prefer foreign goods to those manufactured by their own fellow-countrymen, even at higher prices? While waiting for a satisfactory answer to this question, the opponent of unjust restriction of the liberty of the citizen to buy in the cheapest market may go on to point out that the statement in question with regard to the comparative excellence and cheapness of the protected articles of home manufacture is manifestly inconsistent with the very ground upon which the protected tariff is defended, viz., the inability of the home manufacturers, by reason of their limitations of capital and market, to compete with the foreigner on even terms. The stereotyped appeal to statistics to prove that the cost of this, that, and the other article is considerably less at the present time than it was at some previous period, before the protective system was introduced, has been so often effectively answered that it is scarcely necessary again to show that there has been for many years and still is a general tendency to decline in the prices of almost all descriptions of manufactured goods. This is the inevitable and legitimate result of the constant and wonderful improvement in labour-saving machinery, and the vast increase in the consumption of articles of convenience and luxury which is made possible, in part, by such growing cheapness. The really pertinent question in this discussion is whether and to what extent the protective system operates to debar the people from enjoying the full benefits of the reductions in cost which are rendered possible by the discoveries and inventions of the age. A complete answer to this question would, there is reason to believe, throw a startling light upon the amount of the tribute which is taken by law for the benefit of monopolies and combines. The recent "watering" of the stock of a highly protected cotton industry in Canada, to the extent of nearly one hundred per cent., is one of the many suggestive facts which should help to open the eyes of the consuming public.

THERE is, so far as we are able to judge, no inherent improbability in the cabled rumour that the British Government proposes to withdraw the British troops from Canadian and certain other colonial garrisons, save on economic grounds. But so long as the Mother Country maintains a standing army, the troops will have to be maintained somewhere. We have always supposed that a small part of them have been kept in the colonies mainly because they could be supported there more cheaply than elsewhere, while they were likely to be quite as available in case of emergencies. In fact the world-wide distribution of British possessions and commerce would seem to render it almost imperative that her troops should be distributed to some extent in the same way. For these reasons of her own, Great Britain is not likely, it seems to us, to make any further serious change in the way of concentration of her land forces. For the same reason it is improbable in the highest degree that her Government will withdraw the detachments of her fleet which she has been accustomed to keep on either American coast. But why this commotion, we might almost say dismay, in certain Canadian minds, at the rumour that the Gladstone Government contemplates the withdrawal of the Halifax garrison? The loss, financial and social, to the Haligonians would certainly be great, but that fact could hardly be expected to have weight as an argument with the British people. From every other point of view one would suppose that the withdrawal of the last force of British regulars from Canadian soil would be regarded as a compliment rather than otherwise. We pride ourselves on our loyalty. Prominent Canadians are continually assuring the people of England, in after-dinner speeches and otherwise, that it will be found equal to any reasonable demand which may be made upon it. Surely the withdrawal of a few thousands of soldiers cannot be too severe a test of that loyalty. We are fond of asserting

that we are to all intents and purposes a self-governing people. Many of us even talk upon occasion about our Canadian nationality. We quite resent the offence when our republican neighbours over the way sometimes refer to us as poor colonists under British domination. Now it must be confessed that it is exceedingly awkward for us to fling back the taunt with becoming energy into the teeth of those who hurl it at us, so long as they can point to the presence in our very gateway of a fort garrisoned with soldiers sent across the ocean, as if to stand guard over our country. Quite different will be our position when we can say that throughout our whole Dominion, from Halifax to Vancouver, the soil is trodden by the foot of no soldier who does not wear the Canadian uniform and is not under the command of Canadian officers. While, then, we cannot well object to the Mother Country sheltering a few of her soldiers in the strong and comfortable garrison which she has provided for them at the expense of British taxpayers, so long as she finds it convenient to do so, why should we regard the presence of those troops as a special favour to us as Canadians, or why should we not esteem their withdrawal the highest compliment which Great Britain could pay to our loyalty, our capacity for self-rule, and our ability to take care of ourselves?

BECAUSE Sir John Lubbock in a recent speech pointed out among the great advantages which Canada would derive from a policy of free trade with Great Britain, the fact that the presence of cheap British products in our markets would operate as a strong pressure in the way of forcing the United States to lower her tariff walls, he has been accused of advocating smuggling. We do not wish to quibble or to draw any superfine distinctions in the matter. We have no doubt that what Sir John meant was that the existence of very much cheaper goods of given kinds on the Canadian side of the line would render it impossible for the United States to prevent smuggling, save at a ruinous expense, and that she would, therefore, eventually be compelled in self-defence to reduce her tariff on the articles in question. We confess that we have ourselves used the same argument without suspecting that we were advocating the breaking of any moral law. Perhaps we were. We do not regard smuggling, or evasion of the laws of the land in any particular, as harmless, or as a venial offence, but we had not thought to carry our application of the golden rule so far as to say that Canada should refuse to adopt a free-trade policy, even if convinced that it would be greatly for the benefit of her own citizens, because it would have the effect of tempting some of her neighbours' citizens, of weak virtue, to defraud their country's revenue. On one point we are, however, very clear, viz., that it does not lie with those who have established and still uphold the N. P. on the ground of "reciprocity of tariffs"—in other words, the law of retaliation—to judge Sir John Lubbock on lofty moral principles. It is also to be considered whether this may not be one of the cases in which the end justifies the means, inasmuch as the great benefit to be conferred upon American citizens generally by tariff reduction might make it a work of philanthropy to put before them an object lesson to set them thinking, even at the risk of stimulating the crime of smuggling for the time being.

SPEAKING more seriously, it has always seemed to us that the moral aspects of the tariff question have not usually been sufficiently regarded. It tends more than almost any other law of which we can now think to confuse moral perceptions and obscure moral distinctions. We do not now refer to the principle laid down in effect by the Democratic leaders in the United States, that to levy a tax beyond the necessities of government is a violation of the social compact and of the rights of free citizens, though that principle might be shown to have a moral as well as a political bearing. Nor do we refer to the closely-related question of the injustice and constructive immorality of transferring money by law from the pockets of one class of citizens to those of another class. But there can be no question that any law which fails to commend itself to the reason and conscience of large bodies of citizens, or is regarded by them as arbitrary and unjust, and which many of them consequently persuade themselves that it is not wrong to evade or break, tends directly to lower the moral tone and standards of that people. We say nothing here of the injury it does civilly and politically by lessening the sanctions of law as law, and tempting many who are otherwise upright citizens to