

The Queen's speech at the opening of the Imperial Parliament was not without a certain degree of assurance as to one of the questions in which the Dominion is naturally interested. The Houses were informed that negotiations had been commenced in respect of the Newfoundland fisheries question, and it was hoped that a settlement would be arrived at which would prove satisfactory to all parties. We have a tolerably accurate notion of the settlement that would satisfy the people of Newfoundland, and the British Government is not in the dark on the subject. Never before did our island neighbours take so much pains or use so much freedom of speech in making known their wishes on the French shore question as during the controversy that arose early in the present year. Our readers had an opportunity of learning the views of Newfoundland from one of the delegates sent to this country to obtain the sympathy and co-operation of the Government and people of the Dominion in urging their plea for a revision of the ill-advised treaties which have caused so much embarrassment. The views declared to our Governments, the Boards of Trade and the public of Canada were the same views that the delegates to Great Britain urged upon the authorities there. If, therefore, Lord Salisbury has any hope of bringing the negotiations to such a conclusion as will be acceptable to the people of Newfoundland, he will have accomplished no slight triumph—a triumph on which both our island neighbours and ourselves can cordially felicitate him. No mention was made in the Queen's speech of a question that concerns us still more closely—that of the Behring Sea seal fisheries. On that point, however, the leader of the Government in the Commons assured Mr. Gladstone that he had no reason to apprehend a failure of the negotiations now in process. It has been suggested by experts to the Washington Government that the chase of the fur seal should be discontinued for seven years, that policy being, it is alleged, absolutely necessary to prevent the extermination of the seal. The state of things which such a recommendation on such grounds implies is mainly due to the obstinacy of the United States authorities in refusing to come to an arrangement with Great Britain for the protection of the seals. If the plea for the proposed policy be well founded the action taken should be international, and not based on the one-sided *ipse dixit* of the United States Government.

Some months ago *Garden and Forest* contained an article in which New Englanders were urged to undertake the cultivation of huckleberries for the home and foreign market. We are not aware whether as yet any of our neighbours have profited by the suggestion. There is a kindred branch of fruit-growing, however, to the advantages of which attention was called a few years ago by Mr. A. McD. Allan at the annual meeting of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association. According to Mr. Allan, there are hundreds of acres of swampy land in Canada that could be remuneratively turned to account by cranberry culture, yet is practically useless for other purposes. Hitherto consumers have obtained their supplies either from wild growths far to the northward or by importation from the United States. The cranberry of this continent is larger and of finer flavour than the European variety, and, therefore, finds a ready market in European centres of population. Mr. Allan says that the demand for American cranberries has greatly increased across the Atlantic in recent years, and, the fruit being so easily kept, the business would be sure to be profitable. He also gives full instructions as to the way to proceed in order to raise a good crop of this delicious and most wholesome article of diet. The suggestion may be worth heeding now that Canadians are on the *qui vive* for new markets for whatever they have to sell or may have by a little exertion.

A movement is on foot in connection with Australia's mineral resources which is, incidentally, at least, of some interest to Canadians. The project in view is the establishment of a smelting, alkaline and chemical works company, with a capital of

about a million and a quarter dollars. The scheme includes the smelting of copper by a new process, which will utilize about 3 per cent. of the ore; the smelting and refining of silver ore, and the extraction of gold from pyrites by Pollock's process, which is said to extract from 90 to 95 per cent. of gold. The pyrites would be concentrated at the mines by the dry air concentrator of Clarkson and then sent to the works for treatment. An alternative to this latter plan, where the output of ore is of sufficient importance to justify its adoption, is to erect a gold-extracting plant and treat the ore at the mine, at a royalty. It is proposed, in addition to smelting, to use the surplus sulphur in the copper and pyrites ores for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, which would be utilized with bones from the meat-preserving factories in making superphosphate manure. For this latter substance it is expected that there would be a great demand in the vineyards. Do the vine-growers know of our wealth in phosphates?

### FACTORY INSPECTION.

In connection with the debate in the Legislature on factory inspection, it may be of interest to direct public attention to certain features of the Inspector's report in the last Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture. The Chief Inspector complains of the difficulty in obtaining the addresses of all the factories that should be visited, and suggests that proprietors should be compelled by law to make themselves and the situation of their factories known. This is a serious drawback to efficient inspection and, even by Mr. Côté's admission, a number of establishments were, through ignorance of their existence or whereabouts left unvisited. Then as to the character and efficiency of the inspection, Mr. Guyon says that the Inspector is frequently embarrassed between the demands of manufacturers on the one hand and the claims of the employees on the other, and he finds himself at fault either through omissions or vagueness in the law. The same gentleman, discussing the suspiciously small number of accidents reported during the year in the Montreal district, expresses the opinion that a fully efficient inspection service would greatly increase the total. He points out that in Germany, out of 1,958,000 workmen, no less than 29,574 were injured (1,252 fatally or so as to cause permanent disability) in four months (August to November) of 1881. The system of inspection in Germany is very complete, so that no accident escapes the notice of the proper authorities. In France this subject of labour accidents has excited great interest, and no less than 790 delegates attended the International Congress on Accidents last year. Inspection has revealed the fact that the most serious mishaps to which workmen are exposed arise from the shafting and belting—death or loss of limb being very frequently the result. Most factories are now furnished with automatic lubricators, and attention to the precautions formulated in the law, both as to the oiling of shafting and the handling of belting, had diminished the number of casualties. As to the inspection of steam boilers in the country, Mr. Guyon says that it is practically *nil*. More than a third of the boilers used there are cast-off affairs that have been condemned by the city inspector, which have been fixed up and sold to inexperienced men. He had during his tours met with boilers destitute of test-cocks, and has frequently had to order a manufacturer to remove the iron weights which, in case of danger, would prevent the working of the safety valve. The low-water alarms tend to give greater security; but, in Mr. Guyon's opinion, a thorough system of official inspection, with some recognized standard of qualification for stokers and engineers, will alone effect a satisfactory solution of the question. Defective elevators have repeatedly come under the inspector's notice, and he has taken measures to see the necessary improvements carried out. The amendment providing for the supply of fire escapes by proprietors has produced excellent results. In one case persistent refusal to comply with the law had necessi-

tated an appeal to the courts. As doubts exist as to the meaning of the term "proprietor of the establishment," it should be modified or explained so as to leave no room for ambiguity.

In the matter of sanitation there has, during the past year, been considerable improvement—the wood-working and shoe-manufacturing industries showing most care in this respect. There is still, however, difficulty in inducing compliance with the law by the adoption of centrifugal ventilation, only threats of prosecution being effectual in some cases. On the presence of children and young girls in factories where dangerous and unhealthy industries are pursued, Mr. Guyon regrets that the limit of age was not made 16 years for boys and 18 for girls, instead of 14 and 15. Carelessness on the part of children is a frequent cause of casualties, and it is well known that growing children suffer severely in health when they are placed at unhealthy occupations. Mr. Côté recommends the adoption of several regulations touching boiler inspection, means for extinguishing fires, the hanging of doors so as to permit of prompt egress, and a full supply of conveniences in factories. He also confirms what Mr. Guyon says in relation to the regular inspection of steam-boilers and the employment of certificated engineers. Mr. James Mitchell, in calling attention to the fact that boys acquire the privileges of working as men at 14, whereas in England the age of maturity is 18, in some of the States 18, and in none of them under 16 years, regrets the "frightful ignorance" of both the boys and the girls. In most cases neither they nor their parents could sign their names. These instances of extreme ignorance are, for the most part, found in the cigar and tobacco factories, and consist of young people either of foreign extraction or from the rural districts. Mr. Mitchell acknowledges that the night schools started a couple of winters ago have done much good, but he fears that they can hardly be expected to reach these boys and girls who are too much exhausted with their day's work in the cotton, woollen or cigar factory to be capable of, or have any relish for, any mental strain after working hours. Another point to which Mr. Mitchell directs attention is the injurious effect of dust, steam and gases. He has succeeded, after much thought, in devising appliances for ejecting them, but the chief difficulty is to persuade some manufacturers of their existence and deleterious character. Mr. Mitchell notes an improvement in the condition of the buildings used for factories and workshops. Several of the old dilapidated houses have been vacated and new structures, with modern conveniences, erected in their stead. Mr. Côté says that in all the new buildings the architects had made a point of attending to the ventilation. The number of factories placed under Mr. Guyon's superintendence up to the 30th of June last was 305. The total number of his visits was 400. The number of people employed in the establishments visited was 19,482. Of these 345 were children from 12 to 14; 1,213 girls from 14 to 18; 1,408 women over 18, and 16,516 men. He had made 23 visits in answer to the complaints of workpeople. The number of factories added to the total in his last report was 70. The number of accidents reported to him was 19, of which four were fatal. Of these two were attributed to imprudence, one to disobedience of rules, and one was a simple casualty. Seven occurred in tin-stamping shops, a fact which has suggested that these establishments be classed as dangerous; four in nail factories, two in rolling mills, and one each in a paper mill, stove foundry, door and sash factory, biscuit factory and pipe foundry. Of the fatal cases two were in nail factories, one in a stove foundry and one in a tin-stamping shop. Mr. Mitchell reports fifteen accidents, of which one proved fatal—at the Dominion Bridge Works, Lachine. He says that a considerable number of the large establishments insure their hands in the Accident and Liability companies—a usage which makes them take greater precautions, as the policy is cancelled unless due care be exercised. The three reports, of which we have given the substance, indicate the directions in which reforms of practice and modifications of the factory laws are most called for.