

toxicating liquors; and shows good cause why this question should at least be re-considered. In the United States the entire abolition of internal revenue duties is advocated by some protectionists, as a means of strengthening the case for retention of duties on imports. If there were no revenue from excise duties, there would be the more need of drawing it from customs. Now, if this were the only reason that could be given, we believe it would still be a strong one, taking the ground that it is best to tax importation from abroad, letting home production of every kind go free. All home products in any particular country, Canada, for instance, pay taxes to the Government in various ways. But foreign producers, if we allowed their goods to come in free, would be having the benefit of our market while paying no toll, whereas home producers, being on the spot with all their buildings, plant, etc., cannot by any means escape payment. On grounds of the merest fair play, therefore, it would be outrageously unjust to tax the home producer and let the foreign producer go free. And customs duties are the only means by which the latter can be reached by our laws.

On this single ground the case for the abolition of all excise duties and the drawing of the national revenue from customs duties would be a strong one. But, while not pretending to blink the Protectionist plea, our American contemporary brings forward other and very cogent reasons for abolishing excise duties on liquors. As for other home imposts they have now few defenders over the border, except among out-and-out free traders, who would make the home trade pay everything and the foreign trade nothing, if they could. With regard to intoxicating liquors, however, it is argued that they should be made artificially dear, in order to decrease consumption, also that the trade should be made to pay the expense of jails, asylums, police, etc., because it is a principal means of making the criminals or victims who render such expense necessary.

On two main grounds it is contended by the *Protectionist* that the system of drawing revenue from the manufacture of liquors should cease. One is that such duties have the effect of consolidating and concentrating powerful class interests, which become strong enough to control both legislators and executors of the law. And the other is that temperance men are in reality false to their own professed principles every day they continue to defend the deriving of a revenue from sin. We give an extract or two:—

"It is most unwise to maintain a corrupt and unscrupulous monopoly in privileges that make it strong enough to dictate the nomination of Governors and the choice of United States Senators. It is the internal revenue system that has solidified the liquor interest by confining its control to the hands of a few rich and influential men, and has thus enabled it, according to Senator Sherman and others, to carry a general election in Ohio, as it now threatens to control the choice of a Senator in Illinois. Before the establishment of internal revenue, the liquor interest was scattered and submissive to the general voice of the community. There were many comparatively poor men in the business and there was no monopoly. With internal revenue came the concentration of liquor manufacture into a few hands and its power in the country, which shortly, under the \$2 tax, became so great that for a long time through fraud and corruption it controlled the operations of departments and defied the law; and its chiefs, amassing great fortunes, were able to own the officers of the government by quadrupling their official pay. The methods of the whisky-ring are now different

and less open, but it still exists. . . . There has rarely been a greater profanation of the name of a holy cause than that involved in demanding the retention of the whisky-tax in the name of the cause of temperance. We beg the sincere apostles of the great virtue of temperance, whose principles make them irrevocably hostile to deriving revenue from sin, to reflect on these things, and to join with us in demanding that the blot of the whisky tax shall be expunged from our statutes and that its retention be not effected by foreign interests hostile to our prosperity for the sole purpose of preventing the protection and development of legitimate American manufactures.

That excise duties put the manufactures affected into few hands and create monopolies is a fact too obvious to be disputed. And equally cogent appears to us to be the argument that temperance men are on the wrong track while sustaining excise duties on liquors. As long as a considerable share of the national revenue is derived from this source, the plea that the trade must be sustained has a certain force, which it would lose at once if the reason for it were removed. To remove this reason altogether would mean the removal of one of the strongest props of the liquor interest; and would do more for the cause of temperance than any other measure of legislation which is really capable of being enforced at this time.

#### THE SHEARER SCHEME FOR MONTREAL HARBOR.

On December 22nd we copied among our editorial notes a Montreal despatch purporting to give the substance of a report on the Shearer Bridge and Harbour Scheme, adopted by the Montreal Harbor Board, on recommendation of Mr. John Kennedy, Chief Engineer to the Board. We are now in receipt of a letter from Mr. R. J. Henderson, Secretary to the St. Lawrence Bridge Company, in which he says that we have given incorrect statements on several points. And we are invited to make the following corrections:

It was stated in the despatch that the objections made by Mr. Kennedy were enough to crush the hopes of supporters of the Shearer scheme. But, so far from its supporters feeling crushed, they are now applying to the Dominion Parliament for a charter. A reply by the Company's Engineer to Mr. Kennedy's report (which reply we have not yet seen) has already been published.

Mr. Kennedy does not say that "the channel for rafts and river steamers will be closed entirely," but on the contrary he does say that "the St. Lambert's channel would be equally as good as the present main channel for rafts."

On Jan. 12, 1882, Mr. F. Foster Bateman, member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, was instructed by Hon. Sir Hector Langevin, Minister of Public Works, to report upon the Shearer scheme. In his report, dated Jan. 18, the scheme is favorably reviewed, and pronounced practicable. In October, 1882, it was favorably reported upon by two English engineers of eminence—Mr. James Abernethy and Mr. T. Frederick Bateman. The former, it is stated, has been out here and knows the country. Further, Mr. Henry Roberts, writing on Oct. 30 from Dunster House, Mincing Lane, London, says that should a reasonable charter be obtained from the Canadian Government, there will be no difficulty in obtaining there the money necessary for the work. This letter is addressed to Hon. A. W. Ogilvie, Montreal. It therefore appears that