free labor, will it kindly indicate any remunerative industry at which convict labor might be put, that is not now engaged in by free labor? If it knows of any such, let it mention it, and thereby enlighten the Government. But is not the proposition the sheerest nonsense? If the *Spectator* should happen to know of any such industry, and if the Government should happen to act on its suggestion, and put the penitentiary convicts to work in it, would that be a bar to free Canadians engaging in it also? Would the Government undertake to warn trespassers away from engaging in the occupation under pain of the fierce competition of convict labor which would not be withdrawn?

The manufacturing industries of Canada and free Canadian workmen demand that convict labor shall not be brought into competition with free labor under any circumstances; and this demand they will see enforced. This point settled, it remains with the Government to otherwise do with the convicts as they please.

ARBITRATION.

THE recently issued report of the New York State Board of Arbitration and Mediation calls attention to the fact that many of the recent labor difficulties in that State and elsewhere in the United States were not so much over disagreements as to wages, but whether employers should control and direct their own business without interference or dictation from outsiders; and whether employes, combined in trade organizations, should exercise a power of control and direction, and of limitation over the labor in the establishments and business of such employers.

The result of the attempt to force employers to submit to outside dictation has been that the employers have during the past year perfected organizations among themselves to a greater extent than ever before, and that their objective point is to break down the combinations of the trades as controlling powers over labor employed, and deal directly with their employes, each in his own establishment. The contest is one of combinations of employers on the one side and of the employed on the other. Any one but an ignorant labor demagogue and his blind followers, must have seen that a combination of employers must follow one of employes when the latter, instead of confining its efforts to the protection of labor from manifest injustice, and to the improvement of labor as a marketable commodity, attempted to pre-empt the plain rights of employers. The report says that progress has been made in the establishing of a system of arbitration which reduces the friction between labor and capital. This is, as the report says, a step in the right direction, and we think it will yet lead to the dethronement of the professional agitator.

But one point the report brings out with reference to the strikes on railroads which must appeal forcibly to every thinking man. The report says: "Of what avail is it for the State to possess and exercise a power of control and regulation over railroad corporations created for the public benefit, and over private persons holding and using their property for public purposes, if it permits combinations of authorized and irresponsible employes of such corporations and persons, or others, to arbitrarily arrest and hold at will the operation of railroads and other properties in the service of the public?" This is a question which should be settled speedily, and the Board of Arbitration suggests a remedy which ought to be adopted, and which is bound to be, sooner or later, for the protection of the public against those who work labor strikes for the money they can get out of them.

The report says:—"The operatives of a railroad, from engineer down to trackmen, are, in the practical relations of their services to persons and property transported, far more important as factors than officers of the corporation, and should be held to due responsibility. Nor would the extension of regulations by law to employes upon railroads work any hardship to them. On the contrary, it would be their guarantee and protection, as well as the guarantee and protection of the corporations and the people. A railroad is a quasi-public highway of the State, subject as much to regulation by the State, for the public benefit and for the protection of the lives of people who travel and the transit of the property carried upon it, as if the State owned and operated it itself. When a man takes service upon a railroad, whether as an agent of the corporation or an operative upon the line, he becomes a quasi-public officer, and hence subject to such regulation by law in the discharge of all his duties and the time and manner of his abandonment of them as are appropriate to protect the lives of persons and secure the transit of property carried upon the road. No dispute between these quasi-public officers about the price of labor or any kindred thing should be permitted to jeopardize the lives or interrupt the transportation of property of citizens, to whom the use of a railroad daily has become a matter of necessity as well as of convenience, any more than a dispute between the officers of a railroad and other parties about the price of cars, or rails, or ties, or spikes, or anything else that enters into the equipment and operation of such road. The State should lodge somewhere a power, with ample means of law to make its intervention effective, for the speedy settlement of all disputes between the officers of railroad corporations and operatives of railroad property."

The fact is, many of the phases of the labor difficulties that beset the country, and for which "arbitration" is offered as the only panacea, would be exceedingly ridiculous if it were not that so much damage is done; and if the State can bring any measure of relief to those oppressed by the outrageous conduct of strikers, that relief should be afforded. No matter what the complaint may be, the master of a ship on the high seas has authority to enforce obedience to his proper orders in the management of his vessel, and he is justified in suppressing mutiny even at the expense of blood; and the suggestions of the New York Board of Arbitration are in line with this. But aside from such a solution of the question the demand for arbitration usually made by strikers is after the strike has been inaugurated, and when the time for arbitration is passed. The demand to arbitrate under such circumstances is ridiculous.

If employers will take a firm stand, and refuse to arbitrate whenever the demand for arbitration is preceded by a strike, they will not only benefit themselves, but do the employes and the public a lasting good. An employer who unjustly refuses to submit to arbitration a reasonable demand of his workmen, when arbitration is asked unaccompanied by an attempt to injure or coerce him, may be a fit object of strike logic, and public opinion, which is a most potent factor in the settlements