

power which it does not possess? Before the matter is settled, it is generally admitted, appeal to the Privy Council must be made. In refraining from assuming to exercise a power of prohibiting, the Ontario Government stands justified by the opinion of the Supreme Court. In the political arena, it will not be possible for some time to treat the question of prohibition otherwise than conditionally; there can be no prohibition until it be decided whether prohibition would be constitutional. The Supreme Court of the United States, if asked, would have refused to answer the questions put to our Supreme Court, as it will not undertake to instruct the Government or to decide cases in advance. But our Supreme Court had not the option of refusing to answer.

If the lessons of the late fires be not turned to account, it will be a great misfortune for the city. The deficiency in external resources, in the form of fire engines, will be supplied. But this is not enough. The building laws need careful revision, under scientific guidance. Neither of the buildings in which the fires originated was constructed as it should have been to resist fire. This discovery naturally creates a suspicion that many others may be of equally defective construction. When the by-law regarding fire limits was under discussion, many safeguards contained in the original draft were removed by the aldermen to suit the loose notions that prevailed in different parts of the city. The building laws of the best governed cities should be examined by experts, and a proper building by-law drafted on scientific principles. Aldermen do not always understand what is requisite in such cases, and when they do, they are often urged to do something else than their duty to please some of their constituents who love to pursue methods outside of the line of safety. It is just as important that a proper building by-law should be passed as that the city should be equipped with the best means of extinguishing fires when they do occur.

THE QUEBEC SESSION.

The Legislature of Quebec was prorogued on Saturday last. The Speech from the Throne refers to the large share in the deliberations of that body occupied by agriculture, the preservation of forest resources, and the progressive development of public lands. One of the subjects discussed at length was the proposed amendments to the charter of the city of Montreal, which, by the way, the legislature refused to permit. The result of this refusal will be to saddle that city with the heavy expense of certain municipal works, which many of the leading citizens consider unwise undertakings in the present state of affairs. This appears to be another instance of clamor by the mass of the voters for expenditures that shall give "work to the poor man," prevailing at the expense of and in opposition to the judgment of those who pay most of the taxes.

We observe that the contract made on the 1st July, 1875, between the Government and the Sisters of Providence for the care and maintenance of the insane, will terminate on the 30th June next (1895). New arrangements are therefore necessary, and the House appeared satisfied with the explanations given on the subject by the Provincial Secretary as to the intentions of the Government. Certainly, for the credit of the province, no such barbarous arrangement as to the insane should be permitted as once made the name of Quebec a by-word in two continents.

A bill was passed respecting railway subsidies, also bills incorporating the Quebec District Railway Company, the Cap de la Madelaine Railway Company, the Chateaugay and Northern Railway Company. Among the first

measures passed was one extending the provisions of the law regulating the organization of gas and water companies to electric light companies, following which came Acts incorporating the Hull Electric Company and the Quinze Electric Company, also the Buckingham Electric Railway, Light and Power Company.

There were several measures passed relating to loan societies, one of them to amend the charter of the Sherbrooke Loan and Mortgage Company, another which concerned the Consolidated Land and Investment Company (Ltd.) and the Montreal Freehold Company, and to incorporate the Montreal Investment and Freehold Company, an amalgamation.

An Act is passed constituting Outremont (a suburb of Montreal) a town, and the charter of St. Henri and Cote St. Antoine are amended, likewise that of Dorion Village, and the Village of Senneville, while Cote Visitation is made a separate municipality. A somewhat unusual measure is that whereby the charter of the city of Hull is amended and certain territory is detached from the city. The charter of St. Hyacinthe also receives amendment.

PROGRESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

British Columbia has come through the hard year 1894 very creditably. Economy, greater steadiness and better proportion have been reached in several of her industries. In all three of the principal cities of the province progress has been shown during the twelvemonth. In Victoria, for instance, while the aggregate expended on erecting new buildings or improving old ones was not up to the half million of 1893, the disbursement for the marine railway, the Esquimalt fortifications and the surface sewers will more than supply the deficiency. Imports at Victoria for 1894 amounted to \$2,527,000, of which \$677,000 were free goods. Exports were of the value of \$2,982,000. Inland Revenue collections were \$147,250, which is more than in 1892, though less than in 1893.

The catch of the Victoria sealing fleet for 1894 is the largest in the history of the fleet. The total Canadian catch for 1894 is 94,471, as against 70,332 for 1893.

The output of the Vancouver Island collieries during 1894 shows an increase of 134,577 tons. The Wellington collieries' output for 1894 was 366,765.06 tons; Union collieries, 221,700 tons; New Vancouver collieries, 393,772.17 tons.

According to the *Columbian*, the depression of business so general during 1894 has not been so seriously felt in New Westminster as in some other places. Elements of improvement are thus noted: "In former years a vast credit system was in vogue, people lived extravagantly, and among the great majority of our citizens little thought was taken of the morrow. Now, business is almost entirely conducted on a cash basis, economy is the order of the day, and, in spite of the hard times, a good deal of money is being put by to meet future contingencies. A better feeling pervades all lines of business, and the lumber trade is picking up." The exports from that city show the handsome total of \$1,843,000 in value, as against \$830,000 in the previous year, a very noteworthy showing. The imports were \$531,708 in value, of which \$394,000 was dutiable goods. This is less than in 1893 by some \$62,000. In keeping with the increased export trade, the shipping returns show a large increase over 1893, both in number of vessels, coastwise and foreign, and in aggregate tonnage. Ten new vessels were added to the customs registry at New Westminster during the year.

The year has been a period of general liquidation in the B.C. coast cities, says the *News-Advertiser* of Vancou-