

should induce Canada to accept the trouble, to which it would earn a title, and of which Mormon history is full, if it encouraged their aspirations. If their renunciation of polygamy is sincere, they have entered on a new stage of their existence; but they continued polygamists till after the laws of the United States made polygamy a crime and would probably return to it in the absence of compulsion. If there be any argument in favor of granting the Mormons what they are reported to ask, we shall probably hear it; at present we know of none.

THE HARVEST IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES.

Since last issue we are able to give further particulars with regard to the harvest in Quebec and the Maritime provinces. Harvesting operations were general this week throughout the western portion of Quebec, and further reports show that the effects of the severe drought of the last four or five weeks are more serious in that quarter than any one had imagined ten days before. "All grains have suffered more or less," says our Montreal correspondent, "while potatoes, in many sections, will fall very greatly short of an average, meadows show little or no after-growth, and pastures are very much burnt up, affecting the make of butter and cheese materially. Some pretty heavy showers fell on Saturday last, but further rains have been badly needed."

In the south-eastern portion of that province a better condition of things appears to prevail. At the close of last week, it is true, the hay crop around Sherbrooke was admitted, by the *Gazette*, to be lighter than in former years, but of a better quality. But advices of the 9th instant, from that city, declare the hay crop to be exceptionally fine and well saved. A special issue of the *Star* says, this week, that in wheat, more than usual has been sown this year. It promises to yield an excellent crop, both in size and quality. Slight frosts, however, are entertained by some farmers that in the low-lying districts it may be found slightly impregnated with rust. In oats and barley there has been a very quick growth, and large yields per acre are looked for. A telegram of yesterday from our correspondent in Sherbrooke, says: "Hay crop good and well secured. Oats and barley promise well. Wheat, small area sown but good. Hay and grains rather more than average. Potatoes short in quantity but quality promise good."

Disappointing accounts are heard, too, from the Maritime Provinces. In Albert County, New Brunswick, the marsh hay, which is usually a large crop, has suffered severely. In Cape Breton and other parts of Nova Scotia, according to our Halifax correspondent, "the grain crops, in consequence of the long continued drought, will not only be light, but in some localities will be a total failure. The hay crop, which is the lightest ever housed, will not be sufficient to feed the cattle and farmers are already ridding themselves of their surplus stock." This is bad news, but it is not as bad as that everywhere. Indeed, speaking

broadly, it can only be called bad by comparison with the phenomenal promise of June. We have still much to be thankful for. In Pictou County, on this day week, the grain crops were looking well, though needing rain.

THE TERMINATION OF STRIKES.

Before special machinery for the settlement of strikes was provided, arbitration was urged as the one thing needful. But there never was a time when arbitration was not open to employers and employed; and now when there is a law of the statute book of Ontario providing for the appointment of a Board of Arbitration, for the friendly settlement of differences, neither side, in the present labor disputes, cares to take advantage of it. The act is permissive, and we think it was wise to exclude the element of compulsion. The forming of a Board of Arbitration depends upon the volition of masters and men; if they severally agree to appoint representatives to act as arbitrators, they can do so. The number to be named by each side need not be more than two, and it cannot be more than ten. The chairman would be chosen from outside; and in case of a tie, the full responsibility of deciding would rest on him. The award would be final and conclusive, and not subject to review by any court or other authority.

Here, one would suppose, is precisely the machinery required to settle labor disputes by arbitration. But the statute is a dead letter; strikes go on the same as if it had no existence. And one reason is that the act does not authorize the Board "to establish a rate of wages, or price of labor, or workmanship, at which the workmen shall in future be paid." If there were no other defect, this would be fatal. The principal question, in all the strikes, in the building trades where they have been most rife, has been the future rate of wages. Some agreements about rates have been made, outside the statute, for a period of two or three years. But even such agreements are of very little value. They are not personal but general; and if the workmen should refuse to work at the rates agreed upon, it is very doubtful whether he could be compelled to do so. No doubt it would be very difficult to establish by arbitration a rate of future wages, for any great length of time, which would not be liable to bear hard on either workmen or employers. The value of labor, like that of commodities which labor produces, is constantly changing; and freedom of contract is essential to give play to a fluctuation which is more or less automatic. On the side of labor, it is sometimes said that freedom of contract does not exist; that while the public can generally wait for a particular kind of labor, the laborer in waiting for bread would perish. This is true of the individual laborer, but association enlarges his capacity for waiting. The carpenters' strike, in Toronto, is a question of endurance, between three parties, one of which, the public, is too apt to be left out of the account. The masters can only advance what the public is willing to repay; and if the fund out of which wages can be paid be an exact amount, in

the sense contended for by the advocates of the Wages Fund theory, it is certain that it is not an unlimited amount. This can be ascertained by reference to any individual income; every one is conscious that there is a limit which he must put to his expenditure. The rise of wages above a given point does not depend upon employers; they are merely the agents of the public, whose means of payment must limit the rate of wages. The workmen can afford to pay a certain rent and no more; and any advance in the rate of wages that would necessitate increased rent, he would be unable to meet. Practically this is true of everybody, when all forms of expenditure are taken into account; and it is a complete answer to the assumption that it lies with building contractors to obtain whatever rates they may ask. The delusion of this assumption is still farther shown by the fact that the amount of building going on, at any time, depends upon its cost. When the estimates exceed what intending builders are able or willing to pay, they decline to incur the cost of building, and prefer to wait till it comes down. A person who possesses a lot and some money could borrow enough more to enable him to build the house he requires; but if the cost of building goes up he is unable to do so. The election not to build is now being made on a wide scale. The public refuses to pay the prices asked, and what is especially objected to is the excess of wages over what is considered reasonable. The matter is not determined by the master builders, but is determined for them by their employers. If there had been no trouble about wages, the number of buildings put up in the city, this year, it is safe to say, would have been twice as many as they will be; that is they would have employed twice as much labor.

At the same time, all concerned are suffering from the strike. Those who require extra buildings are put to inconvenience; but they have no choice; they suffer less from it than they would by agreeing, which would sometimes be impossible, to pay rates which they feel they cannot afford to pay. The hand of the public is distinctly discernable in the contraction of building operations. The men who are idle are living on savings, made partly by themselves and partly by others. The fact that they are producing nothing, does not suspend the physical law which makes consumption necessary. Tradesmen with whom they do business suffer, in more ways than one. The slackened demand for building materials makes it difficult for brickmakers and others to know to what extent it is safe to produce; and there is less demand for the labor employed in this line of production.

When more wages for less work are asked, a refusal may be predicted with something like certainty. The mistake arose from the erroneous supposition that there is practically an unlimited Wage Fund on which to draw, and that it depends upon the employer, who is merely the agent of the proprietor, whether or not he will pay a given rate. The real question is whether the public will or can pay that rate. That it refuses is proved, as we have seen, by the diminution of building operations. And