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VICTORIA, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1891.

THE SWEATING SYSTEM.

It would appear as if the sweating system is to a greater or less extent prevalent in Toronto. In fact, an inquiry conducted under the auspices of the Trades and Labor Council of that city shows that in connection with certain cheap john clothing shops, hands are employed in the filthiest dens imaginable, some of them for as much as fifteen hours per day, in return for the pitiful wages of \$1.50 to \$3 per week. The wearers of goods thus manufactured surely do not realize that it is not clothing they're wearing out, but human creatures' lives. Certain members of the Council, it is only fair to say, denounced the report as an exaggeration. It certainly ought to be, as this labor is even proportionally far worse paid than the ordinary Chinese article.

An inquiry is, we are glad to notice, to be inaugurated into this alleged condition of things, and we sincerely hope that it will be extended to the cities of Montreal, Quebec, Hamilton and London, where "hand me down" clothing is largely produced. This system of sweating as it is termed is most baneful in its influence, and a stop should be put to it, as destroying not alone the lives of those who are directly concerned, but of those whose fathers and mothers these ill clad, ill fed and badly housed workers are destined to be. But amid all this squalor and starvation, can it be otherwise than that the clothing made shall be charged with the germs of disease to be distributed among those who purchase and wear it. For years and years, vigorous endeavors have been made to stamp out this crying evil, nevertheless it exists, and is likely to do so until some more effective means are taken than any which have yet been advised or attempted.

THE ANTIPODES.

The *Canadian Journal of Fabrics* has recently published a well thought out article on this subject, which it prefaces with the remark that the trouble with Canada as in the the United States has been that the very solidarity of commer-

cial interests, language and social connections has made us too self-absorbed, in fact, we have become narrowed—parochial, indeed by our continental isolation. While we do not agree with all this, we must admit that there has been a tendency in that direction, although we have upon numerous occasions made endeavors to extend the sphere of our influence and of our commerce relations. Our contemporary, while having its eye mainly fixed on commercial interests, has considerably to say on the subject of imperial connections and imperial interests and objects, whereas, as Canadians, the idea should be "much as I may love Great Britain and the Empire, I love Canada better, and am more concerned in her material advancement than in the sentimental questions that are continually being brought up and emphasized upon almost every occasion."

We are reminded that the recent inter-colonial conference at Ottawa has taught us that "we are simply one of a family of peoples growing up under one empire, and having common aims and ambitions, and each developing special resources and national characteristics that will make us a necessary counterpart in the great empire that seems destined, under Providence, to impose and proclaim the millennial peace upon the world." We must confess to having a liking for this idea of national unity; but, in order to attain it and its best results, there must not be—as we fear, is too prominent—the idea of all the giving being on the one side and all the taking on the other. Some of the colonies have already shown their disinclination to make any more concessions than they can avoid, while Canada has manifested the utmost magnanimity in conceding almost everything that is wanted, trusting to Providence or to the future for her reward.

We may be parochial in a measure, but may not the same be said of the people who live under the Southern Cross—only to a larger extent! We are content to wait to see how they will be prepared to meet the situation; but we want them to do something soon in the way of reciprocity in their local tariffs with which it will then be possible to deal. Let them show their sincerity in the question of relations with Canada by taking action in this direction, following it up by assuming a fairer share of the burdens of the steamboat and cable service than at least some of them appear at present disposed to shoulder.

THE LETTER CARRIERS.

As we said in our last, we cannot but regard the position of the letter carriers and third-class post office clerks as an exceptionally hard one. With the full

amount, including salary and allowance—\$40 in all per month, less 90 cents for the superannuation fund, in which many of them are not likely to be participants—the position, owing to the miserable wages paid, is regarded by many as a mere temporary makeshift. Scarcely one of these officials is, on this account, ready to stay any longer than he can help. The job is not a soft one. In all kinds of weather, the postman is obliged to go his rounds, and the public are possibly more exacting upon him than upon any other class of official. For all that he has to do, even before the provisional allowance was knocked off, he had only \$1.33 per day. How many of the least skilled of laborers receive as little for their services? But deducting the \$10 provisional allowance per month, as has been done, what is there in 97 cents a day for an intelligent man, for the letter carrier must be able to read and write, and it would never do to send out on work like this many men whose only ability is to do work of the hardest and roughest kind? The third-class post office clerks and letter carriers of Victoria are a desirable class of citizens. Many of them are married men with families, to whom small as is the amount, the \$10 difference between \$30 and \$40 means the difference between the ragged edge of starvation and the ability to maintain themselves. But even then there can be no possibility of putting by anything for a rainy day, and, in consequence, at the very best, the only hope of many of the carriers is that when they are gone, Providence or some one more kindly than the Postmaster-General will supply the families they leave with the necessities which a paternal government, no matter how in its fiscal policy it may and is making rich men richer, contrives to rob certain classes of its own employes and make the general public poorer and poorer the longer they live.

Sir Adolphe Caron, who is at present abroad, should have seen to this matter before he went away, otherwise his cabinet colleagues ought to have given orders that for the present no changes should have been made in the direction complained of. As it is it looks almost as if the hon. gentleman had set the thing in operation and then gone away to avoid having to deal with the immediate consequences of the course pursued. But we may remark that the \$10 per month provisional allowance was voted by Parliament last session for the Victoria staff. Why was it then withheld? Is it the intention to make a new deal and, as some have supposed, to divide the amount so voted with the letter carriers of the newly constituted delivery service at Vancouver? This would be manifestly unfair. The House of Commons did not vote the money with that object in view,