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The St. Martins Railway.

It is announced that the Hampton and St. Martins Railway has changed owners. The personnel of the company which has acquired the road is said to be as follows: Robert Carson, president; W. E. Skillen, secretary; S. Ernest Vaughn, treasurer; F. M. Anderson, and E. A. Titus, additional directors. The new company, it is understood, acquires the real estate of the road, and has made an arrangement with the Dominion Government to secure rolling stock. The road bed is in urgent need of repairs which it is said the company will at once undertake. The road has not been for some time past—if it ever was—a paying property, and it remains to be seen whether it can be made a financial success under the new management. The prospects in that direction can hardly be considered flattering. However, there is some freight business to be done, principally in lumber, and it is hoped that with an improved service, St. Martins would become more popular as a summer resort, and thus travel on the line would be considerably increased. One difficulty in the past has been that in the winter months the traffic and travel on the line were so small that it did not pay to operate the road after the first heavy snow storm. There is talk that the new company may build an addition to the line to connect St. Martins with St. John, by way of Loch Lomond. Such a connection would be a matter of great convenience and of material advantage to St. Martins, but whether it would be a paying speculation for the company is more doubtful.

Denmark and Her

West India

Colonies.

A year or so ago there was talk that Denmark was likely to sell her West India Islands to the United States. It is understood that the American Government was willing to purchase at a reasonable figure, and public opinion in Denmark appeared to favor the proposition. There was opposition, however, on the part of the people of the Islands, and the Danish Government finally determined to send a commission to the West Indies to investigate and report upon the condition of its colonies in that part of the world, before further consideration of the proposition to sell them. The report of the commissioners is said to be more optimistic than was expected. They believe that, by means of administrative reforms and a preferential tariff in favor of Danish West India sugar in the home market, a measure of prosperity can be secured to the Islands. They also propose improvements of the Port of St. Thomas, the substitution of Danish for American coinage, and representation for the Islands in the Danish Parliament, with two seats in the lower and one in the upper House. It is expected that the Government at the approaching session of Parliament will introduce a West India reform bill based on the commissioners' report.

Japan's Industrial

Exhibition.

Japan's fifth National Industrial Exhibition at Osaka, which has just come to a successful close, writes a correspondent of the Toronto Globe, "gave most striking evidence of the new life and forces now working in Japan and making it a new nation. Every important note was sounded: her pride in her newly acquired right at the world's council-board; the consciousness of her easy primacy among the Asiatics; confidence in her ability to make or do anything as well as any other nation; an obtrusive conceit in some directions greatly mingled with a certain self-distrust which confesses, the further need of foreign advice and assistance; ambition which dreams of an Asiatic Imperialism for Japan, and of power and splendor such as Great Britain and America possess; love of wealth, sometimes producing very petty condescension for very little gains; love of beauty affecting every sense so that there is left no place for vulgarity—a beauty, nevertheless, which makes no appeal to the intellectual or spiritual, but is purely sensuous; materialism rampant everywhere, yet beneath it all an undertone of longing, telling us that some part of this nation is not at rest in its fair show, but is groping upwards to light and purity." The admission fee was so small—equal to only two and a half cents Canadian money—that even the slenderest purse could afford the luxury of a visit to the grounds. And yet, with an attendance aggregating four millions, it is said that the Exhibition will pay its own expenses. It is estimated that the foreign exhibits

at the fair were less extensive than might have been expected, the explanation of this being that the Japanese are less inclined to purchase than to imitate articles thus brought to their notice. "What is the advantage of sending machinery to Osaka?" asked the head of one foreign firm in Kobe; "the Japanese would not buy it, they would only make more like it." In the native exhibits in the department of Industrial Arts there was a remarkable blending of the old and the new; sometimes the two were side by side and were yet distinct, but more often now the new transfigures the old. There was the rare Satsuma, the most exquisite pottery of the world; glimmering cloisonne, the perfection of porcelain, made over a silver form; lacquer dried a hundred times in the making and literally worth its weight in gold; damascene wares, beaten together from silver, gold and bronze; silks from the looms of Kyoto, and wood-carvings from the chisels of the Tokaido—all indigenous arts of Japan, and superior to any similar arts possessed by any other people. The art of Japan consists essentially in the application of ideas of beauty to objects of common use. An example of this type of art was seen in a chair which is thus described: "Its arms were dragons' heads, its back a spread eagle, its seat was sustained on swarming turtles' backs and its legs were twisted serpents." But the Japanese have also turned their attention in the direction of the modern utilities and inventions. They have inspirations in the departments of electric dynamos, bicycles, plate glass and soap. Having much sulphur in their land, they are also great on matches and hope ere long to control this business for the world. In the fine arts building there was found much to admire. There were several oil paintings in the modern arts department which would do credit to a Paris saloon and might find a permanent place in one of the national galleries of Europe. "There were all the special buildings usually included in large exhibitions. The Transportation building with its rickshaws, Kaga, electric trams, railway trains and steamship models, marking the steps in the quick evolution of travel in the short period since Japan began to move about; the Educational building showing the work of all grades of schools, from the Kindergarten to the university, especially rich in the products of the industrial and technical schools; the Forestry building with its sections of wood cut in various ways so as to show the fiber or the strength or the beauty of the different trees of the country, including the cryptomeria, pine, oak, camphor, eucalyptus and maple, of which last there are fine groves in at least two localities. The bamboo figures largely in Japanese forestry, being used for almost every conceivable purpose, the young shoots being eaten as food and the full-grown cane being made into house timber. There was the Horticulture building with its magnificent conservatories, containing, it would seem, every plant that ever bloomed in tropical or temperate zone. There was the Dairy building, fresh and clean, albeit the cream and butter were of only indifferent quality, and by reason of Japan's agricultural limitations are not likely ever to be good. There were the cattle sheds and horse sheds, but the contents of either were scarcely even the beginning of really good stock. There was a fine Machinery Hall with all manner of tools for mining and dredging, but with the significant absence of almost every sort of agricultural implements."

"The Miracle of Radium."

One of the most wonderful things about the recently discovered substance, radium, is its enormous, and apparently perpetual, emission of heat. According to M. Currie's calculation the emission is at the rate of about ninety centigrade calories per gramme of radium per hour. Lord Kelvin has dealt with this quality of radium in a paper which he read at a meeting of the Science branch of the British Association. Accepting M. Currie's calculation, Lord Kelvin said that if the emission of heat went on at this rate for 10,000 hours, there would be as much heat as would raise the temperature of 900,000 grammes of water one degree centigrade. It seemed utterly impossible to Lord Kelvin that this amount of heat would come from the store of energy lost out of a gramme of radium in 10,000 hours. It seemed therefore absolutely certain that the energy must somehow be supplied from without, and he suggested that ethereal waves might in some way supply energy to radium while it was emitting heat to matter around it. Lord Kelvin illustrated his theory by the following comparison: Suppose a piece of white and a

piece of black cloth, hermetically sealed in similar glass cases were submerged in similar glass vessels of water, exposed to the sun. The water in the vessel containing the black cloth would be kept very sensibly warmer than that containing the white cloth. Here the thermal energy was communicated to the black cloth by waves of sunlight and was given out as thermometric heat to the water in the glass around it. Thus through the water there was actually an energy travelling inward in virtue of the waves of light and outward through the same space by virtue of thermal conduction. Lord Kelvin suggested that experiments be made comparing the heat emission from radium wholly surrounded with thick lead with that found in the surroundings heretofore used.

Mr. Balfour's Pamphlet.

Much interest attaches to the pamphlet on the subject of Insular Free Trade issued by the Prime Minister of Great Britain last week. The pamphlet is important, especially, because it appears to foreshadow a distinct change of fiscal policy on the part of the present administration. Mr. Balfour declares himself still a free trader, but not without certain reservations. His position appears to be, in short, that he believes in free trade as the best fiscal system for the world at large, but does not believe that it can be successfully maintained by one nation in dealing with others which practice a protectionist policy. He points out that as there is a result of England's policy of retaining free her trade system, the rate of her export trade has not increased but in fact has seriously diminished. And meanwhile Germany, the United States, France, Russia and even Great Britain's self-governing colonies continue to build up a protected interest within their borders. Mr. Balfour does not indeed contend that Great Britain's trade is on the verge of ruin, and he finds no evidence that the nation is living on its capital, but he contends that in the future the disadvantages which the nation suffers must increase with the growth and spread of protection abroad and the absorption of new markets. "The only alternative," he believes, "is to do to foreign nations what they always do to each other, and instead of appealing to economic theories in which they wholly disbelieve, to use fiscal inducements which they thoroughly understand." It would appear then that Mr. Balfour's plan is to have free trade where it can be free on both sides, but if British products are met with hostile tariffs in the markets of a foreign country, then the products of that country shall find similar treatment in the British market. This is what is called fair trade, and if Great Britain should find it to her advantage to adopt it protection countries would certainly have no reason to complain that their products were no longer admitted free to the British market. It is, however, by no means certain that such a change in Great Britain's fiscal system would be to her advantage. Some loss in the rate of increase in British trade is probably inevitable under any system. Whatever may be the ultimate result to Great Britain of the adoption of a system of retaliatory duties, the immediate effect would almost certainly be to increase the cost of production. It is the low cost of production which free trade has made possible, together with the possession of coal and iron, that principally has ministered to Great Britain's commercial supremacy in the past, and it is at least a fair question whether the adoption by the other leading nations of the free trade system would not be a greater menace to Great Britain's prosperity than the continuance of their present policies of protection. Considered politically, Mr. Balfour's move is doubtless intended to shelve for the present Mr. Chamberlain's thoroughly unpopular scheme involving a tax on breadstuffs. It is expected also that it will lead to the retirement of some members of the administration and the consequent re-organization of the Government.

Since the above was written despatches have announced the resignation of Mr. Chamberlain and two other members of Mr. Balfour's cabinet—Hon. C. T. Ritchie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord George Hamilton, Secretary for India. Mr. Ritchie and Lord Hamilton retire because they cannot follow Mr. Balfour in the direction of fiscal reform which he has indicated in his pamphlet, but Mr. Chamberlain resigns for the reason that Mr. Balfour's programme does not include a declaration in favor of a scheme of preferential duties with the colonies. However, Mr. Chamberlain approves the Prime Minister's course, since his own plan, involving a tax on bread, is too unpopular to be put forward, and Mr. Balfour in a letter to Mr. Chamberlain, approves the latter's scheme in principle, but agrees with him that it is impracticable now, and accordingly acquiesces in the Colonial Secretary's resignation. What the outcome of the present interesting political situation will be it is hard to say, but it does not seem probable that the nation is at present disposed to adopt either Mr. Chamberlain's or Mr. Balfour's ideas on the subject of fiscal reform.