

We are quite at a loss to understand the action of the Middleton Committee in rescinding their order for the attendance of witnesses from the N. W. It seems to us that Col. Bedson, Major Hayter Reid, Col. Straubenzee, Capt. Freer and several others should have been summoned, or a Commission appointed to take their evidence on the spot. It would have also seemed natural if General Middleton had said—"Bring all the witnesses that can be brought; I desire to have this thing thoroughly thrashed out." Meanwhile the public must await such developments as the committee will vouchsafe it.

The enormous increase in the range of the new rifle is not unattended with serious inconveniences. The War Office authorities are, it seems, experiencing much difficulty in finding suitable ranges for practice with the new magazine rifle, and until this can be overcome practical operations with the weapon are virtually suspended. It has been found that the rifle carries a ball a much greater distance than our present ranges permit with safety, and that much danger, in consequence, arises from stray shots. At Aldershot, a few days since, a bullet from one of the new rifles was carried a distance computed to be two miles beyond the ranges.

During the forthcoming census in India special arrangements will be made to obtain statistics of the lepers all over the country, according to their various districts, their ranks in life, occupations, race, religion, &c; and it is probable that any comprehensive legislation will be suspended until the results of this branch of the census inquiry are made known. Of course measures for the segregation of lepers will be proceeded with immediately. Might not this furnish a hint to the authorities entrusted with the preparations for the census of 1891. There is undoubtedly leprosy in the land, and everything connected with it ought to be known.

It is curious that the great name of Louis Kossuth, though it must ever hold an honored place in the list of patriots, has come, in his extreme old age, to be a word wherewith to conjure injustice. Kossuth, now living at Florence, has always refused to acknowledge the Empire of Austro-Hungary either by word or deed, but in deference to his popularity a bill was passed to allow him, by a certain specified date, to declare himself a citizen. He refused, and pressure was brought to bear on Herr Tisza to override the law. The veteran Premier declined and a storm arose which swept Tisza out of office. Herr Tisza is not only one of the ablest administrators in Europe, but no influence was able to shake his popularity and power until he ran counter to the sentiment of the Hungarian people in regard to Kossuth.

It does not at present appear that the increase of the duty on American flour will actually raise the price of that article to the consumer. Of course every attempt will be made to convince the consumer that it will, and one of the consequences will no doubt be that feeling will run high among a large section of the inhabitants of the Maritime Provinces against the present Dominion Government, which would no doubt have been materially mitigated had these Provinces received somewhat of a *quid pro quo* in the shape of an augmented rate on foreign coal, both anthracite and bituminous. It is moreover of course, though not likely, within the bounds of possibility, in the case, for instance, of a very short crop in Ontario, that the duty might render flour dearer to the consumer, and in such a case the Maritime Provinces would feel still more sensibly the neglect of their interests displayed by the Dominion Government.

The owners of coal mines in this Province are deeply interested in the enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals, as once this is effected large steam colliers will be able to deliver coal at Ontario Lake ports without breaking bulk. In this connection the assurances of Sir John Macdonald to a delegation which waited upon him to urge the enlargement are most satisfactory. He is reported as having stated that "we may fairly calculate upon the enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals throughout within the next three years." Very large smelting works are to be erected near Port Arthur which will require thousands of tons of coke and coal; and if, by the enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals, colliers from Pictou and Cape Breton can be sent through to that port we may by wise management secure this market. To do this, however, the duty on bituminous coal and coke must be increased, an increase as we have before shown, to which we are fairly entitled by the removal of the duty on Anthracite, and our members at Ottawa should not allow this session to close without securing our rights in this respect.

There is fun ahead at the expense of the Canada Pacific, which we residents by the sea can now rather enjoy since that great corporation so shamelessly broke its pledges to us. The United States Senate have decided that the road must come under the provisions of the Interstate Commerce Act and its bonding privileges across Maine are in jeopardy. There is now only one safe course for the Canada Pacific to pursue, and that is to join the Grand Trunk and back up the Maritime Railway in its efforts to secure a subsidy to build the missing link between Edmundston and Moncton. The Government and City of Quebec have granted a large sum to build a bridge over the St. Lawrence at Quebec, and this will give the Canada Pacific direct connection with the Intercolonial and the new Short Line to Halifax, which has the great advantage of being all on Canadian Territory. There is every possibility that self-interest will compel the Grand Trunk and Canada Pacific to join forces in favor of the new route, and then Halifax will have solid ground for rejoicing. In time all will admit that THE CRITIC, Engineer Keating, and ex-Mayor Mackintosh were right in favoring the Quebec route.

The first meeting of the Amalgamated Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade was held on the 20th instant. The combination of these associations should result in a body of great power, and, as was remarked by the President, if the two bodies "have done good work in the past every year opens wider avenues. If," said the President, "we have no prairies at our back like Manitoba, we have immense resources of our own, notably our unsurpassed mineral products, which require only capital to develop." Mr. W. C. Silver was elected the first President, a well-deserved honor; Mr. E. G. Kenny, Vice-President. Fifteen members are to form an Executive Board. Mr. Creed was appointed Secretary, and Mr. Bishop Assistant Secretary. There is every reason to hope that the combination—there ought never to have been two bodies—will, if they sedulously keep politics out of their deliberations, become a lasting benefit to the City of Halifax, and we heartily wish "more power" to them.

Mr. A. Martin Payne's breezy articles in the *Echo*, so graphically describing his trip from Liverpool to Halifax via New York and Boston in eight and a half days actual travelling time, serve only to emphasize the disgraceful service furnished this port by the *Allan and Dominion Lines*. The *City of Paris*, on which he embarked for New York, met the same heavy westerly gales encountered by the *Peruvian*, but the powerful ocean greyhound forged ahead, making a quick passage. Last week the *Polynesian*, due on Sunday, the 23rd, with the English mails, did not arrive until Friday morning, the 28th. She left Liverpool on the 13th March, and on Wednesday night, the 26th, an English mail via New York was distributed in our Post Office, bringing letters dated in England March 14th, or one day after the *Polynesian* sailed. How long will the people of this Canada of ours tolerate such a miserable service? It totally discredits Halifax as a Winter Port, and does us no end of harm, while the owners of the respective lines pocket a handsome subsidy and insolently ask—"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

The Commissioner of the N. W. Mounted Police reports very distinctly in favor of the allowance of beer-brewing in the N. W. Territories, both in the interests of sobriety and for other reasons of considerable importance. As regards the first there can be no question that men who can obtain a glass of fair beer will be less inclined to run any risks in the endeavor to procure the deleterious spirits which, despite every precaution, will occasionally find their way into the Territories where it is prescribed. A beer spoken of as "four per cent. beer," meaning, we suppose, beer containing that proportion of alcohol, is recommended, and certainly such a beverage must be absolutely harmless. "Barley grows well in the Territories, and in some sheltered places, hops, but they are at present unsaleable. Home breweries would keep a considerable amount of money in the country, and afford a market to farmers for grain which they could grow to advantage, as it can be sown long after the season for sowing wheat and oats expires." Such considerations are ignored by fanaticism, but they will operate with all people of common sense and moderation.

"The liquor question," says the Commissioner of the N. W. Mounted Police in his annual report, "is in nearly the same position as it was last year, there is still a considerably outcry against the enforcement of the Act in the various towns, but not nearly so much as last year. The facility of obtaining permits for the sale of 'four per cent. beer,' and the great improvement of the quality of that article, has to a large extent lessened the demand for stronger beverages, and there has been much less drunkenness in the country; certainly, the free use of it in the police posts, where canteens have been established for its sale, has made a great difference in the conduct of the men." But beyond this, the interdiction of a reasonably guarded sale of liquor in the towns is likely, besides stopping a legitimate source of municipal revenue from licenses, to act as a deterrent to intending settlers who repudiate the extreme conclusions of the prohibitionists. It is no light matter in cases of illness, where some form of light stimulant is prescribed as a part of daily diet, that sufferers or their friends should have to pay enormous rates for the glass of wine or beer which may be, and often is, a material item of the invalid's dietary.

The retirement of the great German Chancellor is an event of the highest import. Prince Bismarck had been often prompt to threaten resignation even when his old Master, to whom he was no doubt intensely attached, took upon himself to have things his own way, but contact with the impetuous and strong-willed young Emperor has put aside further hesitation. No doubt advancing age has begun to tell upon the Chancellor, and may have weighed in his decision. There is probably no fundamental disagreement between the Prince and the Kaiser, but it is probable that the Emperor's whole individuality, as it gradually developed, convinced the old Statesman that such a master and such a minister could not long work satisfactorily together, and that it was time for the minister to give way. What may be the result to Europe can scarcely be conjectured. It may be that the absence of the Chancellor's guiding hand and large experience may come to be severely felt, while the character and aims of William and are not yet clearly understood. He does not, perhaps, as yet clearly understand them himself. He has been thought to be inordinately fond of the profession of arms, but he has furnished evidence that his military predilections occupy only part of his thoughts—possibly not even the largest part. The Hohenzollerns, with all their ambition, inherit traditions of the duties of royalty, and few of them have slept on the bed of the Sybarite. There are in the Kaiser's recent actions grounds for the belief that he may sincerely recognise the forces of democracy, but it is impossible as yet to predict the course he may elect to pursue.