

short of absolute surrender of our rights—rights bequeathed to us by our fathers and the heritage of our children. We must fully agree that it is our bounden duty to maintain our rights prudently—temperately, and yet fairly—and to trust to the good sense of our neighbors to the south—now that the exigencies of party warfare have diminished—to avoid any further embitterment of these disputes and facilitate an honorable and fair settlement.

I trust it will be practicable so to legislate on the Electoral Franchise as to make it possible to conduct an election contest without challenge, which, with the most honest intentions, it seems now difficult to do. It speaks volumes for the conduct of our elections that out of 1,140 elections conducted under those Acts, only 6·3 per cent. have been voided.

The expediency of assimilating the laws of the various Provinces in regard to bills of exchange, cheques and promissory notes is too obvious for argument. Many of the differences now existing are only partially known or understood, and uniformity may be secured with much advantage.

Bills of lading are now such an important description of security that any legislation tending to make them more easily and uniformly available will be of the greatest value. I trust that, while on the subject, it will be found possible to impose limitations on the terms of those documents themselves, and prevent the possibility of bills of lading being used which practically exempt the carriers from all liability of any kind.

Probably no public work has attracted greater attention than the great trunk line in this Dominion, spanning the continent and connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific ocean. As a necessary consequence, we have opened up to us infinite possibilities in the way of extending our trade with China, Japan and Australia, and I trust these efforts will be rewarded with success.

A great development of our trade with the West Indies and South America is, to my view, quite practicable without sacrifice, and in this connection let me say that I know of no industry nor any interest in this Dominion which will not hail with satisfaction such an extension on terms of

mutual advantage. It is known to hon. gentlemen that Spain concluded, some years ago, a treaty with the United States which failed to pass the Senate; it is within my knowledge that the Spanish West Indies are ripe for such a treaty with this Dominion, and in my opinion now is the time to strike for a measure so desirable. We can probably obtain an enormous outlet for our lumber, fish, coal and manufactures in return for concessions on the duties now exacted on the staple products of their regions. If such things be possible with the colonies of foreign nations surely they are practicable and even more desirable with our own fellow subjects in adjacent territories.

The Royal Commission on labor having now concluded the work, and made its report, the result of an enquiry so deeply affecting the interests of so many of our fellow subjects, will be waited with deep interest. But no one who has followed the evidence taken before that Commission can be altogether ignorant of the facts it has elicited. I venture to state one broadly—that during all the period of depression from which we are now emerging, capital suffered, dividends disappeared, but wages did not sensibly, if at all, decline; the products of our farms and factories declined in price, all necessaries that enter into the expenditure of our working classes were cheapened, and the means to buy with continued as great as before.

There never was a truer word said than that capital and labor are like the blades of a pair of scissors—the most efficient of tools combined, but utterly useless apart.

I trust that the report of the Labor Commission will indicate the direction in which the condition of our laboring classes can be improved, and I am sure this hon. House will give its earnest attention to every proposal in this direction. I trust I may be pardoned if I invite the attention of hon. gentlemen to one or two facts of our national life which speak volumes as to the progress of this great Dominion, and which will, I trust, give confidence to those who believe in its future and are proud of being in the ranks of her sons.

In 1868 our imports of raw material of all kinds was only \$5,365,000. In 1888 they had risen to the enormous value of \$28,361,347. But this is not all. It is known to most of us that large quantities