

talent to discover the most suitable modes of refining. We have no doubt the Standard Oil Trust will do its refining well, for which we may be grateful. The business of the Legislature is to see that this monopoly does not establish here its destructive methods of competition, which it has already introduced. If by a system of secret rebates the railway companies are playing into the hands of the Trust, Parliament will be justified in using the most drastic means of bringing to light and frustrating this method of evading the laws passed for the protection of the public against such practices.

The British Columbia Legislature has repealed the subsidies granted last session, conditionally, to Mackenzie & Mann, in connection with certain imperfect railway contracts. The contracts were conditional on a supplementary grant being made of \$6,000 a mile of the distance to be covered by the Dominion authorities. This condition, the present British Columbia Government contends, vitiated the contract. In any case, it must fall, in the absence of the supplementary grant. The repeal Act appears to be political, and it looks as if the present Government might be just as ready, occasion offering, to walk in the footsteps of their predecessors, in this particular, as the latter were to take the step of which all but the trace is now effaced. Some raised the cry of confiscation when the bill was before the Legislature, but there was in fact nothing to confiscate.

Hon. Mr. Mills writes to a British Columbia Liberal Association asking the members to tell him how redistribution of seats in the House of Commons, for that province, can be made in accordance with the principle of preserving existing county boundaries. Desirable as is the preservation of county boundaries, there is something else, and that something constitutionally imperative, which is even more important. It is a fundamental principle of our constitution that representation should be based on population; in fact, this may be called the corner stone of Confederation. Now it is quite clear that you cannot have the two things, at the same time, equal representation and the old county boundaries, which came into existence under a different distribution of population. You cannot divide a member, you cannot half a member, much less quarter him and preserve his utility. You must either give up any real approach to equal representation or the old county boundaries; which of the two should go does not admit of doubt.

In opposition to a bill now before the Ontario Legislature to abolish exemptions of church and other property from taxation, a number of influential persons, connected with various denominations, raise their voices. Even if the contest assumed the form of numbers against argument, and it is not certain that it will, numbers would prevail. The time for abolition of exemption is not yet. Will it ever come?

#### WHAT NEXT?

No agreement having been come to by the International Commission so far, the question whether any chance of anything being done at Quebec next summer, is pertinent. In some quarters there is a disposition to refuse to believe that the Commission will ever meet again. This is a matter which cannot be determined for certain, until after the next session of Parliament, at Ottawa, and the engagement to meet, whether redeemed or not, will meantime give the Government a breathing spell, if it desires to

lay on its oars. The Protectionists will of course try to make the most of the opportunity; the Government is sure to be asked whether it has any intention to put into practice the hint thrown out by Mr. Charlton, at Chicago. But the Government will be under no necessity of committing itself by a direct reply; it will be able to hold out the prospect of another meeting of the Commission as a reason for doing nothing in the direction indicated. When the failure of the efforts of the Commission becomes definite, if the fate be reserved for it, undoubtedly the time will come for Canada to re-survey the whole ground, for national and political reasons. At present, Canada buys from the United States three times as much as the Republic buys from her; and there is no disguising the fact that this condition of the international intercourse, due largely to artificial causes, is not satisfactory. The Republic repels our trade, except on the side of her exports. Similarity of products of the two countries is an excuse for the subjecting much of what we produce to high duties; when she does not require certain of our products for her own use, she repels them, as articles of commerce by which a more liberal policy would enable her to profit. It is becoming pretty evident that we cannot change her policy by the methods we have been using, no matter how liberal the offers we make. If we are once convinced of this beyond doubt, the time will have come for us to consider whether it is worth while to change our plans. To enter on a narrow or illiberal policy is not the wish of Canada; of this she has given undoubted proofs in the offers made, at Quebec and at Washington; to use the weapons of a commercial rival may sometimes be a matter of necessity, and if we be pushed to extremities, we may be obliged to do what we should not elect to do, under circumstances of free choice. Nations as well as individuals must live, and the more illiberal among them often have the power to influence for evil the policy of the others. The policy of the United States towards Canada has sometimes created the suspicion of being underlain by political motives. If this country were convinced that this is true, it would, practically with one voice, make a counter political demonstration that would entirely subordinate minor economic considerations. But she is not yet convinced, only occasionally a little suspicious; and she continues to be anxious to trade on fair and liberal terms with her neighbor. Whether she will be permitted to do so is not in her decision. But, if the worst comes to the worst, she has within her keeping resources which may be used for the protection of her commercial independence.

#### AN ATTEMPT AT SPOLIATION.

Some of our Toronto aldermen appear to be afflicted with civic astigmatism, from the way in which they launch or approve certain projects to benefit themselves or neighbors among the citizens, while these same projects may directly injure another class of the population. The latest thing we hear of, and we hear of it through a copy of a Bill, No. 88 before the Legislature of Ontario, is a request by the city for power to operate a ferry between Queen's wharf "or some other point" to the Island by means of a chain "or by means of steam power, or otherwise," and the corporation asks for leave to raise money by taxes or to borrow money for such a purpose. We have looked into this scheme and find it not likely to be as cheap or simple as it looks at first. Report No. 8 of the Board of Control of the city, dated 8th February, 1899, estimates the ferry and cribbing to cost \$7,112; but the cost of providing a sidewalk and bicycle path from the present northeast corner of the Island will probably be as much more, and it is not