with charcoal for fuel, Canada is positively unrivalled in the wide world. There are extensive districts where the ore lies below the surface, with the material for making charcoal on the spot or very near to it; and both in quantities practically inexhaustible. Anthracite coal we have none, on this side the Rocky Mountains, at all events, but of bituminous coal we have enough and to spare. Whether Nova Scotia coal and western ores can be profitably brought together remains to be seen; but it may be that improved railway and shipping facilities will before long help us greatly towards a solution of the problem. As for the problem of making charcoal-iron in Canada, that nature has solved for us already, and nothing hinders but our own slowness in taking the steps necessary for using the treasures which nature has bestowed upon us. The rapidly increasing use of charcoal iron, for machinery and structural purposes, and for railway purposes generally, is a feature of the subject possessing a strong practical interest. In connection with the expected early development of iron production, as an important step forward in Canadian progress, the figures above quoted are worthy of attention.

ELECTRIC LIGHT LEGISLATION.

On Monday week the bill incorporating the Edison Electric Light Company of Canada was read a third time and passed in the House of Commons. There was quite a lively and lengthy debate on the occasion, and, strange to tell, it was not so much the scientific and practical merits of the scheme itself, as the political aspect of the bill for allowing it to go on, that formed the subject of discussion. Mr. Mills objected that the granting of charters such as this one belonged to the Provincial Legislatures, and not to the Dominion Parliament, and Mr. Blake sustained the objection. Sir John Macdonald and other speakers showed that many other bills bearing the the same relation as this one to Dominion and Provincial powers respectively had already been passed at Ottawa. Mr. Blake expressed his belief that scores of acts in excess of its powers had been passed by the Dominion Parliament, still contending, however, that such errors in legislation should not be made precedents. The question as to the limits of Dominion and Provincial powers respectively, in its political aspect, is not one for discussion in these pages: but we may be permitted to remark that, as the solution of the electric light problem is intimately connected with and is in fact mainly dependent upon the use of numerous patents for inventions, legislation concerning which is a matter belonging to the Dominion, the chartering of electric light companies should be a Dominion affair too. This view of the matter we hold to be at once simple and incontrovertible, and we feel sure that this conclusion must be reached by any reasonable man, who will trouble himself about it so far as to look down to the bottom facts which have to be dealt with.

What discussion there was on the merits of the present scheme had to do chiefly with the enforcement of proper precautions against danger to life and property. It has to be borne in mind that, while the electric current on a telegraph wire is so weak that it does not harm small birds, the current on a wire conveying a lighting power equal to that of several thousand candles is strong enough to kill a man as lightning does. It is also capable, under certain circumstances, of instantly developing intense heat at this or the other point; and precautions of the most efficient kind for preventing such accidents must be taken. Of course Parliament has power to compel such precautions to be taken; and they appear to be embraced in the bill now passed, as far as our present knowledge of the new invention and its working extends. Should experience and discovery yet to come dictate still further precautions, they will doubtless be made compulsory at the earliest possible opportunity. *Salus populi lex suprema*—the safety of the people is above the law; and we doubt not that the Dominion Government, without waiting for the action of Parliament, could any day by Order in Council enforce the instant observance of fresh precautions, were those in the bill to be found insufficient. This, however, should not lead to slackness in the matter of making the present bill as perfect as possible in this respect ere its final passage. And it may still be desirable, therefore, that when it comes before the Senate the provisions against danger to life and property should be carefully considered over again. According to present indications, the importance of the electric light discovery, as one of our most valuable modern improvements, can hardly be over-estimated. The consideration that it is now almost certain to come into use on a large scale and for most important purposes, is in fact a main reason why such precautions as those referred to are the more necessary. Were it likely to turn out a mere scientific curiosity, without practical value to the world of work and business, all this would deserve the less attention. But the probabilities now look very much the other way; we may expect that not only the electric light, but also the conveyance of mechanical power in the form of electricity to considerable distances, will ere long go upon the historical record as real, practical discoveries, of immense use and benefit to mankind. And the probable, or now rather the certain practical importance of these discoveries may properly be taken as a measure of the public interest in all measures for bringing either or both of them into extensive and every-day use amongst us.