

"The inspection of all industries" where there is danger to life or health, is agreeable to reason. "Exclusion of the Chinese" is an old demand which has been compromised by the imposition of a heavy tax. "Abolition of property qualification for all public offices" is probably somewhat of a misnomer; the so-called offices being presumably those of the legislator, there is little or nothing left to be done in that direction, so that this plank may be regarded as superfluous. There is still qualification for aldermen. A better substitute might be found in the compulsory vote.

### TRADE WITH THE ORIENT.

Canadians have yet to realize their opportunities of trade in the Orient. We have repeatedly pointed out opportunities for export, and now that a period of extreme activity in railway building is opening up in China a wide field is opened up for the products of this country. There is little possibility that any of the main contracts for Chinese roads will be let to Canadian capitalists, but in the supply of material there is every chance of securing trade. Pacific Coast lumbermen are now understood to be bidding for the contract to supply ties for the proposed Chinese railways, which when let will be one of the largest lumber contracts ever entered into. Should the contract go to British Columbia it would tax the mills of the province to their utmost capacity, for already they have a great deal of work ahead of them, a number of new charters having been announced, irrespective of the big contract. The excellent credit of the parties who have assumed these contracts makes it the more desirable that a share should come to Canada.

The Government of Japan proclaimed last week that the new Japanese statutory tariff, as well as the English, German, French, and Austro-Hungarian conventional tariffs, would be put into operation on the 1st of January, 1899. This step marks the inauguration of Japan's new treaty relations with the Western powers. The revised treaties as a whole are to go into operation on the 19th of July, 1899, but by their terms it was provided that, if the Japanese Government so desired, a new tariff might be substituted before that date for the conventional tariff, which has been in exclusive operation since 1866. The new tariff will consist of two parts: First, the schedules of rates on certain articles specified in the treaties with the four powers named; and, second, the general statutory tariff enacted by the Diet. The conventional tariff will continue during the life of the treaties; the statutory tariff will be subject to the legislative will.

Some information about the Australian province of Victoria is given in the report of Mr. J. S. Larke to the Department of Trade and Commerce at Ottawa. The trade figures of that colony for the last fiscal year show an increase of £849,645 in the total imports and of £2,541 in the exports, though it was the third bad year of failure of its outputs of wool, butter and cheese. The figures are the largest in the history of the colony. Canada has not been doing much with Victoria, and 1897 shows a decrease in this trade compared with 1896 of from £19,528 to £11,682. Her imports from Canada are timber, pig iron and steel, and lumber. The trade in deals alone shows a decrease of £9,500, the trade not being profitable and the market overloaded. For the first time Victoria records exports to Canada, the exports being £424, of which £250 were uncut opals, £75 a piano, the remainder being sample lots of canned vegetables and fruit. The Canadian Commissioner says that inasmuch as Victoria has a high tariff and New South Wales is a free trade colony, Canada need hardly

expect to do so much with the former. Judging from the list given above Victoria has no great variety of articles to sell to us.

### CANADIAN OCEAN LINES.

A somewhat curious fact in connection with our transatlantic trade and the mail service connected therewith comes strongly out in an interview, published in the English press, with Mr. Jones, head of the shipping firm of Elder, Dempster & Co., on the subject of their carrying trade to and from Canada. It will be remembered that the firm named offered the Canadian Government to carry mails between Montreal and Bristol free of charge. It is definitely stated that the firm wrote to the Postmaster-General of Canada about August 12, offering to convey the mails free of cost between Canada and Avonmouth, but the Government representative in Montreal replied that while he thanked them for the offer, he was unable to take advantage of it.

Upon being asked by the interviewer how he came to make such an offer, Mr. Jones explained as follows:

"We have a fleet of steamers which sail every week from Montreal to Bristol, and every week from Bristol to Montreal. They are cargo boats, but they are all modern vessels of good speed, and it frequently happens that they arrive in Avonmouth before the mail steamers, which bring the consignees' letters and bills of lading. In consequence of this many consignees have cargo and have no shipping documents, and it is very inconvenient for them to wait until the documents arrive before they can get delivery of their cargo. Wherever we can, to oblige the shippers and to prevent delay in the delivery of their cargo, we deliver their goods on an indemnity. Of course there is but little risk about this to the shipowner. Nevertheless, there is nothing like exchanging the proper shipping documents for the cargo; it avoids confusion, and everything is then in order. We have had so many complaints from the shippers about their not having their bills of lading that I thought it would be better not only in the interests of the people who ship by our line of steamers, but more convenient for ourselves as well, and I therefore sent word to our Montreal house to suggest that we would carry the mails free."

It is to be borne in mind, of course, that our mails do not all go by Canadian steamers, but that those forwarded *via* New York, which are the great majority, certainly reach Liverpool more quickly than they could by a freight steamer from Montreal, even if she be faster than the Canadian transatlantic mail carriers. Still, it is an uncommercial and an awkward thing for people's shipments to reach the other side of the ocean before the documents which relate to them, and something should be done to cure such a state of affairs.

In connection with this subject and with the tenders now asked by our Government for a weekly service during the St. Lawrence navigation from Rimouski to Merville, and vice versa, average time seven days, and between Halifax and Merville eight days, Mr. G. H. Dobson, of North Sydney, writes urging that the subsidy should not be tied up for only a weekly service of low speed, whereas with new postal subvention arrangement we might have a semi or tri-weekly service. Instead of a fixed subsidy for a slow weekly service he suggests the Post Office Department offering subsidy or postal payment for the best performance of speed and give Canadian mails homeward to daily sailings or as often as suitable steamers offer. Such an arrangement would mean competition and boats on the Canadian route of increasing speed. England, as he points out, divides her subsidies between the lines, with speedy boats. Germany likewise, while the United States system of giving the mails to the steamers which have made the best record for speed is found to work satisfactorily.

A liberal subsidy contract would be necessary to secure vessels of 22-knot speed, as no boats of high speed are on the Canadian route. But it is argued that to give a contract for a weekly service by a single line of 15 to 16 knots when there are several lines of nearly equal speed which could easily give a tri-weekly English mail would be