

sold, unknown to him, at some distant port. Some consular abuses may be put an end to, and port charges may be reduced. Should the convention gain only these ends, its existence will not have been in vain.

THE COMMERCIAL TREATIES.

In the recent negotiations between England and Spain for a commercial treaty. Spain demanded for her wines the same treatment that France or any other favored nation might receive. In return, she was willing to grant to England the treatment accorded to the most favored nation. The most favored nation clause is a feature of nearly all commercial treaties. Under it Canada, if she were included, would almost certainly have to put the wines of France and Spain on the same footing. Spain, not having had a commercial treaty with England, was excluded from this privilege by the tariffs of 1877. As she had felt the disadvantages of differential duties, she was naturally anxious to be placed on the most favored nation footing. These hostilities were mutual, for while England discriminated against Spain, Spain in turn discriminated against England.

Spain, in these negotiations, asked that one shilling sterling be the duty on all wines of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to $21\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of Gay-Lussac's hydrometer. The reason for this demand is that the largest part of the English importations from Spain consist of sherries of from 18 to $21\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of that standard. Mr. Gladstone, on his part, proposed to modify the alcoholic scale by reducing the duties on wines of the strength between 15 and 25 degrees (Gay-Lussac), the additional duty above one shilling a gallon to be $1d.$ for each degree on all wines above $25\frac{1}{2}$ degrees Gay-Lussac. Five degrees Sykes are equal to three degrees Gay-Lussac. England also required as an equivalent for the concession she proposed to make, that Spain should reduce the duties on her iron and her woolen fabrics. The announcement was afterwards made to Parliament that the British Government would postpone the question of reducing the wine duties till next year.

The French wine trade, as represented by the Beaune Chamber of Commerce, favors a single uniform tax on all wines up to the strength of 26° Sykes' hydrometer, because it would embrace all French table wines and prevent the complications that arise out of different rates of duty. This would of course suit the growers of and dealers in high-priced wines; it would also suit Spain with her strong wines; but it would bear unequally on the consumers of cheap wines. The principle is one which it would hardly do for

—Letters received at Quebec from Paris announce the success of the new Credit Foncier. The \$5,000,000 (about) will be issued as soon as it is possible to find investments for it. The operations of the company will not be confined to the Province of Quebec; and it is possible that Ontario will be one of the principal fields of exploitation.

MANITOBA.

WINNIPEG, August, 1880.

The wide stretching prairies and rolling plains that constitute this rising Province, and spread far away beyond its borders to the great North-West, are at present only dotted with settlements here and there. It is so unlike all the rest of Canada that no one who has not seen a prairie region can form anything like an idea of its appearance, and of the condition of its growth and development. The prairie regions of the Province are great seas of luxuriant grass, in which tens of thousands of cattle might find rich pasturage, and yet scarcely be seen in the vast expanse. There are only a few heads here and there, and their fat, sleek condition testifies to the richness of the fare on which they feed. For the most part, they are fairly bred animals, and, on the whole, superior—even now in the very infancy of things,—to many of the cattle found in other parts of the Dominion. Travelling these prairies is almost like sailing out into the wide ocean. A traveller may proceed, hour after hour, on the well beaten track, until not a vestige of woods, or houses, or barns is to be discerned. Nothing then is visible but the wide plain, stretching out its immense expanse in every direction, covered with deep, rich, swelling grass and flowers, and bounded by a horizon that stands out level and sharp against the sky, exactly like that of the sea. Not that solitude reigns in these plains. Once it did, and that not many years ago. Now, however, the waggons of the settlers are almost sure to be seen, drawn by oxen, slowly making their way across the plain. The waggon is piled up with household goods, or store purchases, and wife and children are pretty sure to be found snugly ensconced inside. Days may elapse before they reach their destination, yet the journey will cost them a mere nothing. They carry supplies of provisions, and, as often as required, they camp out on the plain, turning their oxen loose to enjoy the pasture. These prairies are susceptible of cultivation over nearly every acre of their extent, as is proved clearly enough by the fine crops raised,—with the very minimum of labor—by the settlers who have chosen them for their home. Formerly, these regions were considered valueless. So they were reported, with rare exceptions, by those who knew most about them, the officers of the Hudson Bay Company. Probably an undue measure of blame has been attached to these gentlemen, as if they had been guilty of deliberate misrepresentation. It should be remembered, however, that the prairie regions of the United States were once

looked on in exactly the same light. Accustomed, as they were, to the wooded regions of the older states, they imagined that when the end of these was reached, everything of value in their great territory was exhausted. The prairie was for the trapper and the hunter, not for the farmer and the trader. It no more entered into the mind of a citizen of the United States seventy years ago, that a city like Chicago would one day be found on the shores of Lake Michigan, than it did in that of a Hudson Bay officer of that day, that a town like Winnipeg would ever be found on the banks of the Red River. We made similar mistakes about certain portions of our own country. The oak plains on the shores of Rice Lake, between Cobourg and Peterborough, were despised as valueless by the older settlers. So were similar tracts of land near Brantford. Yet time has proved their mistake. Some of the finest farms in Canada are now to be found in these very plains. So, in reporting the great prairies of the North-West to be valueless, the Hudson Bay officers were only falling into the mistake that others had done in similar circumstances. The time for these mistaken ideas, however, is now passed. By the very practical process of settling on the prairie, turning up its soil, cropping it, and reaping from twenty to thirty bushels an acre of wheat, (sometimes thirty or forty, in fact,) and forty to sixty bushels of oats, we have demonstrated the real value of the great tracts of country that have fallen into our hands. Such crops are to be seen to-day, ready for reaping. Vegetables, too, are most prolific, and potatoes obtain a luxuriance of development, and richness of flavor almost unique.

I repeat, there can be no doubt about the productiveness of the land, nor that we have millions upon millions of acres of it, all as good as that which is now producing the crops I speak of. Much of what is now cultivated does not produce such crops as these. The very richness of the soil and the ease with which it is broken up and worked have begotten habits of ease and carelessness, especially with the half-breed farmers along the banks of the rivers. These formerly gave a tone to the whole agriculture of the North-West, and the style of farming was very slow, old-fashioned, and unprofitable. Of late years, however, better things have begun to prevail; and the difference in results may plainly be discerned, when a farm, under proper cultivation, is carrying a wheat crop of thirty-five bushels to the acre, while another, with precisely the same soil, and closely along side it, has barely fifteen. This may be seen to-day, at no great distance from Winnipeg.

It should be remembered, too, that nearly all the land in the North-West is either pure open prairie, or is covered with such a light growth of bush as to be practically the same.

The settler opening up new land here has not the long, weary labor that awaits him in clearing the forest in other districts. The soil is ready for the plough at the very beginning. A first ploughing, which turns over the sod, is succeeded by one (called here *backsetting*), which turns it