

spirits was held on 1st Jan., 1896 and 1897, and on 1st Jan., 1897 and 1898, by the liquor dealers in Canada, and knew how many gallons they had taken into stock during each year, we should have reliable data for comparing the actual consumption in those two years. But no such reliable data is found in the mere statistics of the movements of wholesale quantities into, or out of bond, of either home made, or foreign spirits, or both combined. Crude statistics are as mischievous in their way as crude spirits, they only muddle the brain and confuse the judgment. The Inland Revenue Report gives the per capita consumption of wine in 1896 as 7 parts of a gallon divided into 100 parts, and in 1897 as about 8 1-2 parts, an increase of 20 per cent. The same statistical rule, or principle, applies also to this item, the figures given relate, as do those of spirits, to the trade movements of wine; they are not reliable data for drawing conclusions as to the actual use of wine by wine drinkers. It is, however, known that there has been a large increase in the use of wine in Canada in the last twelve months. Claret is now being retailed at \$1 and \$1.10 per gallon, and, in single bottles, at 20 cents and 30 cents, which is meeting with large sales amongst classes who have not hitherto been wine bibbers. We are informed that this light liquor is displacing cheap whiskies, and beer, to a great extent, which is a change of habits that many temperance advocates regard with satisfaction. The higher import duty placed on cigarettes has stimulated their home production, the number of home made ones taken out for consumption in 1896 being 77,664,000, and in 1897, 92,134,000, an increase of 14,470,000 in the number of cigarettes alleged to have been consumed in 1897 over those in 1896. The increased duties no doubt are accountable for this increase by causing tobacco dealers to load up their shelves before the new duties came into force. The following comparisons are given for what they are worth, but for reasons we have stated they ought not to be used as evidence of the habits of the people in one year as compared with another:—

	1896.	1897.	Increase or Decrease.
Spirits produced galls.	2,382,216	2,279,958	- galls. 2,102,225
" Taken for consumption.....	2,463,000	2,907,802	+ galls. 444,802
Duty on Spirits.....	\$4,010,000	\$4,770,000	+ \$ 760,000
Malt liquor consumed galls.....	18,614,000	17,888,000	- galls. 726,000
Duty on malt.....	\$776,000	\$1,026,000	+ \$ 250,000
Cigars, No.....	108,290,000	113,276,000	+ No. 4,986,000
Cigarettes, No.....	80,461,000	93,800,000	+ " 13,339,000
Canadian Tobacco, lbs.	463,000	726,000	+ lbs. 263,000
Inland Revenue.....	\$7,956,000	\$9,182,000	+ \$ 1,226,000

The departmental Report explains the increase of revenue as being almost wholly caused by anticipations of the current year's receipts, that is, there were excisable goods "taken for consumption," as the official phrase runs, in large quantities in order to increase the stocks of such goods which had paid a

lower rate of duty. This fact, we submit, throws the comparison of actual consumption, or use, of excisable articles entirely out of joint.

THE YUKON RAILWAY.

It would be a disaster to the country were the railway from the Pacific coast to the Yukon district, to be much longer delayed in construction. A more facile, rapid, and safe mode of reaching the newly opened district in Alaska, is essential to the development of the mineral riches of the Yukon, and the transaction of such business as will be created by settlers. Canada cannot afford to let so splendid an opportunity be lost for increasing her trade, and her attractions. The question then arises, by whom must means of communication be constructed? Two courses are open, either to grant large cash, or land subsidies, or both, to induce a private company to build a road, as was done in the case of the Grand Trunk, and the Canadian Pacific, or, for the Government to build the road, as was done in the case of the Intercolonial. The latter course would not commend itself to the people of Canada. It is proposed to have a line of railway, and steamboats, built, and operated by a private firm of capitalists, who have agreed to construct and operate such means of communication between the coast of Alaska, and the gold fields. They agree to do this on condition of their receiving a subsidy of some three and a half millions of acres of land, and an exclusive right to own, and work a road through this region. What the value of this land grant may be is unknown, it may turn out to be very large, but there is some risk of its being less than the contractors anticipate. They are also to have the concession of paying only one per cent. royalty on whatever gold is produced on their land, instead of ten per cent., which the other settlers have to pay. There is this to be considered about a land grant to a firm, it will be worthless until it is settled upon, and it will be their direct interest to draw settlers as early as possible. This immigration will be of the utmost advantage to the country by promoting development, and its consequent trade. As the allotments to the firm are to be alternate sections, the others being held by the Government, the settlements made by the firm must help also to settle the other sections, so that as the interests of the firm are being promoted, so, at the same time, will be the interests of the country at large.

THE LACHINE RAPIDS HYDRAULIC AND LAND COMPANY.

The Lachine Rapids, Hydraulic and Land Company held its third annual meeting, on 8th inst., Mr. G. B. Burland, the President, presiding. The financial statement for the year ending December 31, 1897, showed that in the months of November and December sufficient revenue had been earned to pay the interest of 6 per cent. on the six months' bonds