

necessary in the public interest, the tariff will not be permitted to stand as a base for such operations. But Sir John never reasoned more inconclusively than when he strove to make it appear that the people have a safeguard against monopolistic terms and prices in the possibilities of competition. Anyone must have observed and reflected to little purpose upon such matters who is unable to see how futile is the hope of relief from any such quarter. The whole history of tariff-protected monopolies shows how relentlessly and speedily they can crush out or buy out all would-be competitors when once they have possession of the field. Further developments will, in this case, be watched with great interest. There can be no doubt that in the tariff-making and un-making power, the Government has a lever by which it can move this monopoly at will. But will it use that lever in the interests of the people? Can it do so without subjecting itself to a charge of partiality or opening the way for action against other monopolies, similar in kind though not in degree, which have hitherto been left unmolested?

VIEWED from another stand-point, what a comment upon human short-sightedness and stupidity is the fact that in this age of boasted enlightenment we are forced, for want of a better, to rely upon the clumsy and costly expedient of competition to save us from the jaws of monopoly. That simply means that when one selfish corporation takes us by the throat our only resource is to call in the aid of other corporations equally selfish, and setting the factions at war, make our escape under cover of their struggles. Not only so, but we are actually compelled, or think we are, to summon the system which is least able to serve us to destroy the system which has in its power to produce for us the article we need both more cheaply and of better quality than any of its rivals. Take the case before us. No thoughtful person can doubt that a well-managed combination of all the cotton factories in the Dominion would be in a position, if only it could be trusted to do so, to produce better fabrics and at less expense than it is possible for a number of companies to do, working on the smaller scale and with the inferior resources that are within the reach of their divided and weakened resources. Just think, too, of all the duplicating of machinery, agencies, salesmen, etc., which are necessary in the beneficent competition whose praises we sing. Thus the fact is that just when the various cotton factories of the Dominion have put themselves into a position in which they are able to serve their customers much better than ever before, we feel ourselves obliged to call upon Parliament to devise measures for putting a stop to their improvements and compelling them to return to the former wasteful methods. Surely a better safeguard of the people's interests will some day be found. Why not let the monopolies go on and reap all the advantages of combination, on condition of their submitting all their operations to the oversight of some trustworthy officer representing the people, and empowered to investigate cost and profits and regulate prices accordingly?

PREMIER ABBOTT was somewhat shocked the other day at Senator Boulton's declaration that in his opinion the Newfoundland Government was justified in enforcing the Bait Act of 1890 against the Canadian fishermen. It is impossible to justify the Island Government for enforcing this Act in the face of the assurance given to the British Government by its (the Island's) own premier, Sir R. Thorburn, in 1887, that it would not be enforced against Canadians; nor can the plea—the only one that we have seen put forward on behalf of Newfoundland—that “the greatest of premiers has no power to overrule an act of Parliament, or to limit its application, or to bind the Legislature,” be accepted as a satisfactory defence. That the Newfoundland Government has no better plea may be inferred from the fact that the words just quoted are those of Mr. Harvey, a prominent member of the said Government, in a letter to the *London Times*. There would soon be an end to all confidence between Governments if it were to be once understood that no reliance can be placed upon the formal assurance of the head or official delegate of a Government in a case of this kind. But in regard to the merits of the Bait Act itself, so far as its enforcement against Canadian fishermen is concerned, Mr. Abbott's explanation is hardly free from the common vice of one-sided statements. He says: “It was said recently that the reason for the enforcement of this Act against Canadians was that Canadians and Americans were selling to French fishermen bait which

they obtained in Newfoundland waters.” Mr. Abbott adds that this charge was not made at the time (April, 1890), but only recently. The following extract from Mr. Harvey's letter to the *Times* in December last puts a somewhat different face on the matter:—

But although Sir R. Thorburn had no power to bind successive parliaments, the promise made by him would, in my opinion, have been kept in the letter and the spirit; as it certainly has been in the latter, had Canada not become purveyor in general of bait to the French—and continued so to the present time—thus to a considerable extent, just as far as she is able, frustrating the objectionable Bait Act. When supplying the Canadians with bait became synonymous with supplying the French it became a question of suspending the Act and letting our own poor fishermen get the benefit of the bait traffic, or suspending the Canadians, and I hold that any men in like case would act as we did, suspend the Canadians.

It will scarcely be believed that when your columns last April and May were teeming with telegrams of the utter ruin that was being wrought to the Nova Scotia banking fleet by the denial of Newfoundland bait, Nova Scotians were busy getting bait from their own coasts for the French, and that when the fleet of Newfoundland schooners which ran the blockade about that date got into St. Pierre they found a Canadian schooner giving the French 1,100 barrels of bait from the Magdalen Islands—Canadian territory.

From this it is evident that the original complaint of Newfoundland was that the Canadian fishermen were supplying the French with bait from Canadian, not Newfoundland, territory. Possibly the complaint referred to by the Premier has been put forward since as an after-thought, consequent on the untenableness of the former position. From the Canadian point of view it is little less than absurd that Canada should be asked or expected to do what Mr. Harvey gives as the well-understood condition on which our fishermen can have access to their bait-grounds, viz., pass a bait act similar to theirs against the French. “Why,” we ask with the emphasis of surprise if not of indignation, “should we be expected to embroil ourselves in our fellow colonists' quarrel with the French?” And yet it cannot be denied that there is at least some force in the rejoinder: “Why should the obligations, of whatever kind they may be, imposed by the relationship of neighbours and fellow-colonists, have force in only one direction? If the relationship in question imposes upon Canada no obligation to aid us, or even to refrain from aiding our rivals in this struggle for existence, why should it lay us under obligation to give special consideration to Canadian fishermen because they are our fellow-colonists?”

WHATEVER force, or want of force, there may be in the argument of our Newfoundland fellow-colonists as set forth in the preceding paragraph, it is but fair that their view of the case should be put clearly before the people of Canada. It is because we do not remember to have seen it thus put forward that we give a little more space to the subject. It can hardly be denied that there is a good deal of plausibility, to say the least, in the consideration hinted at in the last sentences above. The Newfoundlander may well complain that when he asks consideration and aid from Canada in his special difficulties, on the ground of the family connection, he is pooh-poohed as making himself ridiculous by expecting such a thing; but when, on the other hand, he tries to fight his own battles as best he can, and Canada gets hurt incidentally in the contest, we immediately begin to cry shame upon him for his want of brotherly regard for our feelings and interests, and run off to complain to the Mother across the water. Were the shoe on the other foot, Canadians would undoubtedly resent the selfish interference of a neighbouring colony to prevent the Mother Country from consenting to legislation which we believed to be to our own advantage. And yet, from the Newfoundland point of view, this is what Canada has done repeatedly; first in regard to the Bait Act of 1887, and again in regard to the Blaine-Bond Convention. Can it be greatly wondered at that the Newfoundlanders have been much exasperated by this repeated interference of Canada to defeat legislation which they believed to have promise of great advantage to them? Let us hear Mr. Harvey on this point. He begins by quoting the following declaration made by the two Houses of the Dominion Parliament in the year 1891, and forwarded by the Governor-General in an address to Her Majesty on the powers of self-governing colonies as to the making of treaties of commerce:—

The Canadian Houses of Parliament consider these provisions of foreign treaties . . . tend to produce

complications and embarrassments in such an Empire as that under the rule of your Majesty in which self-governing colonies are recognized as possessing the right to define their respective fiscal relations to all other countries, the Mother Country and each other.

“Newfoundland,” proceeds Mr. Harvey, “is a self-governing colony. How, then, can Canada, after adopting this address, with any show of justice permit the British Government to refuse to ratify the convention and, *à fortiori*, how is it possible for her to ask Great Britain to do what Canada solemnly avers Great Britain has no right to do? But she does, and, stranger still, Great Britain, who assents to the proposition that the self-governing colonies possess that right, denies it to Newfoundland. What is there peculiar in Newfoundland that she should be treated differently from all other colonies? Have the sufferings she has gone through for the sake of international amity with France put her out of the pale of ordinary justice?” On many questions of fact Mr. Harvey and other members of the Newfoundland Government allege that the representations made by the Canadian Government are incorrect or unfounded, but we have not space to follow up the subject. We are glad to learn that there is some prospect of an amicable settlement of this unpleasant feud. Such a settlement is earnestly to be desired. Whether a settlement such as Premier Abbott hopes for, on the basis of admission of the Island into the Confederation, would be, under present circumstances, advisable, is another question.

WHY should the people of the Dominion be taxed for the payment of more than a quarter of a million of dollars every year for the support of persons who have been retired from the public service, either on account of inability to perform the duties of their respective offices, or, as there is reason to fear is too often the case, to make room for the exercise of Government patronage? It is not the least of the evils of the superannuation system that it affords so great facilities and temptations for the last-named abuse. What more natural than that when a member of the Government finds himself hard pressed by the importunity of some impecunious supporter who has claims upon him for past services he should begin to look around for some opportunity to create a vacancy on the superannuation plan? Looking at the system on its merits it is hard to see any good or sufficient reason why members of the public service should not be placed under the same necessity which rests upon men in every other employment, to make provision for old age while in health and strength. No doubt the fact that they have this provision to look forward to must greatly increase the temptations, always strong enough, to the weak-minded to live up to or above their incomes, though thousands of others on much smaller salaries find it possible to make provision for the future. It is essentially unjust that men of the latter class should, in addition to providing for the present and future wants of themselves and those dependent upon them, be compelled to pay taxes to make up for the lack of self-denial and foresight of those who have better advantages than themselves. It cannot be that the rates of remuneration in the public service are lower than those which prevail in other similar positions, else why so great competition for places? Were it otherwise, the natural and just remedy would be to increase those rates to the proper figures. Mr. Mulock's proposal to withhold a certain proportion from the salary of each official in order to provide a superannuation fund is objectionable in principle as savouring of paternalism, and would be injurious in practice as relieving those affected by it of a certain part of their own proper personal responsibilities and thus depriving them of a natural and healthful incentive to frugality and foresight. The sooner the members of the public service are placed on the same basis in regard to the present and the future as the great majority of those who help to pay their salaries, the better will it be for all concerned, especially for the employees themselves.

WHAT is the origin and meaning of those wonderful tales that are being cabled across the ocean about the alleged operations of German balloons in reconnoitering Russian fortifications? Are they the pure inventions of imaginative correspondents who love to play upon the scientific or unscientific credulity of the times? Or can it be that German science has actually solved the problem of aerial navigation? It is probably safer and more sensible for the present to accept the stories with very large grains of salt. That balloons may be in use by the Germans for purposes of observation is far from unlikely. Nor is it by any means incredible that some of them may have taken