

ment control, with practically irresponsible authority; and secondly, the maintenance of the railway committee of the Privy Council, with extended powers, and all requisite departmental machinery for the enforcement of the law. After long and careful deliberation, they came to the conclusion that the latter was the preferable plan—the committee itself to hear and determine disputes, to decide questions of freight classification, tariff and uniformity in railway returns, and to appoint provincial officers for like duties, with ultimate reference of doubtful points to the committee. They also recommended the passing of a general Dominion railway law, which would remove the present confusion, due to conflict of jurisdictions.

The appointment of a Minister of Agriculture for Great Britain may not be without consequences to Canada. After years of depression, agriculture in England seems to have assumed an air of confidence and hopefulness. The speeches at the recent meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society were, on the whole, of a most encouraging character, and, although too much trust cannot be always placed on utterances prompted rather by a sense of what is due to the occasion than by a consideration of realities, there is no reason to doubt that agriculture has received an impulse that is likely to prove fruitful, and to make England less dependent on foreign and colonial farming than she has been for a long time. Whether that revival has any connection with the decrease in the export of wheat from Canada to the United Kingdom we cannot say as yet. The risks of wheat culture in Great Britain are so great that it is only under exceptionally favorable circumstances that it can be engaged in with profit. If one of the results of organizing the new department should be to put the growing of wheat on a more advantageous footing in the United Kingdom, Canada might, of course, feel the effects of the change. But so also would Russia, Australia, India and the United States.

The yearly average of auxiliary food supplies during the last ten years has been about \$450,000,000. The imports of wheat in the seven years, 1879-85, reached the enormous figure of 409,186,000 cwts., valued at £203,323,000 sterling. The aggregate imports of wheaten flour during the same septennial period amounted to 92,959,000 cwts, valued at \$69,235,000 sterling. The other auxiliary food supplies imported into the United Kingdom, comprise potatoes, butter and cheese, eggs, cattle, fresh and salted, bacon and hams, sheep and lambs, lard, etc. The importation of these food supplies has, in the main, gone on increasing since the establishment of free trade, and it has been accompanied by the oft-repeated complaint that British farming is unremunerative. Of the whole area of England about 80 per cent. is considered productive; of Scotland, about 29; of Ireland, about 74; of Wales, 60—the average of the entire United Kingdom being about 60 per cent. Of the productive area cereal crops occupy about a fourth in England and Scotland; a sixth in Wales; a little over a ninth in Ireland—where two-thirds of it constitute permanent pasture-land. The rivalry between the advocates of pasturage, few but powerful, and the claimants of more land for tillage, many but practically powerless, is the vexed question for which the new Minister of Agriculture will be asked to find a solution. To make farming remunerative in the United Kingdom, not for a class, but for the

millions, is a task worthy of the best statesmanship that England has in her service.

We would call special attention to the article, with accompanying chart, on Transatlantic Cable Routes, which appears in the present number. In connection with the subject, we may say that Mr. F. N. Gisborne is now on his way to Belle Isle, in the Government steamer Napoleon, to survey the landing places, etc. He is, we understand, accompanied by Mr. R. R. Dobell, of Quebec, the chief promoter of the enterprise, by Dr. Selwyn, C.M.G., of the Geological Survey, and the Hon. Mr. Boucher de la Bruère, late President of the Legislative Council, Quebec. The party left Quebec on the 13th inst., taking the north shore to Pointe des Esquimaux and the River Natashquan, visiting all the light-houses on Anticosti and back to Tshikaska on the north shore, and thence to Greenly Island and Belle Isle. From this last point they will go to Cape Bauld and other west coast light-houses on Newfoundland. From there they will return, *via* Mingan, to Quebec, devoting about four weeks to the trip. We have reason to believe that the Canada Atlantic Cable will be ere long an accomplished fact—a fact which will be a source of gratification and advantage to the Canadian people.

NEW OUTLETS FOR TRADE.

The mission of the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott to Australia is an undertaking from which there is reason to expect results advantageous to both our fellow-colonists and ourselves. That the commercial relations between Canada and Australia have not yet begun to assume the character and dimensions which they might have if the subject were fully ventilated in both countries has long been felt. It may be that those who see grave obstacles to such relations ever becoming very extensive, or very profitable, are correct; but until every effort has been tried to develop them, and to bring about an inter-change of such products of either country as might find a paying market in the other, it is mere guesswork to pronounce for or against them. Outlets for our trade have already been discovered where formerly there were no prospects of any. Ten years ago many commodities, which are now manufactured in Canada, were entirely imported, and once they began to be turned out of Canadian workshops, there was no trouble in finding a destination for them. That there are still parts of the world where the knowledge of their merits has not penetrated, or where they have not succeeded in making way against rival fabrics, is not greatly to be wondered at. The manufacturers of the United States have just been taking to heart the comparative insignificance of their trade with Central and South America, and even with Mexico and the West Indies. A great association has been organized for the purpose of pushing their business into those markets, hitherto in possession almost wholly of Great Britain, France, Germany, and other European countries. By means of far-reaching agencies they hope to make up for what they have missed in the past.

The trade of some of the countries in question is by no means trifling—that of the Argentine Republic, for instance, being \$160,000,000, of which \$98,000,000 represent imports. Brazil, again, has a commerce of nearly \$240,000,000, of which the imports amount to \$105,000,000. The proportion of this large import trade that falls to our neighbors is extremely small—not more than

from 7 to 9 per cent. It is practically the same with Chili, Bolivia, the United States of Colombia, and the other countries of South America. Our own trade with these countries is still more modest. Last year a commissioner was sent by the Government of the Dominion to the South American States on the Atlantic seaboard, and a good deal of valuable information was collected; but the report could not, on the whole, be said to be encouraging. If there were in some directions grounds for hope, there were, on the contrary, drawbacks that could not be ignored. One thing, however, was made clear—that a business could be done, with a little effort on the part of individuals, much more important than that which already existed. The great staple, for instance, of Canada's export trade to the Argentine Republic—one of the most important of South American States—is lumber. Yet, of 212,000,000 superficial feet which the Argentines imported in 1886 only 34,000,000 feet were supplied by Canada. There are, as Mr. Jones, our Commissioner, points out in his report, certain reasons why the amount of Canadian lumber put on the Argentine markets is so limited. One of the reasons is that such lumber has to be specially cut and prepared: a promiscuous ordinary cargo will not satisfy a people clinging tenaciously to their own usages. Mr. Jones has given memoranda of the assortments of white pine, spruce, etc., that suit the River Plata markets. Then there is the question of communication, and there are other points to which we need not refer just now. But no benefit worth having is obtained without some exertion and self-sacrifice. The Europeans who have secured so large a share of the important and remunerative trade with South America had to take thought of many things, and to adapt themselves to the needs and wishes of their customers. On those points those of our readers who are interested should consult Mr. Jones's report, which can be obtained for a trifle without difficulty.

Like our neighbours, we have again and again had discussions as to the measures necessary to develop our trade with the West Indies. The people of the islands so called are to a large extent our fellow-colonists, and our relations ought to be satisfactory to both them and us. Some years ago a good deal was written on the subject, especially in connection with Jamaica, which sent commissioners to Canada to treat with our Government. The enthusiasm rose so high that it was even proposed to make Jamaica a province of the Dominion. There were many obstacles in the way of such a scheme, however, and it never, perhaps, was seriously entertained. But trade with the West Indies is another question. No countries could be better suited for reciprocity of natural productions. They could send us raw sugar, spices, coffee, fruits, and other articles of tropical growth; while Canada could, in return, dispose to them of a portion of her surplus in fish, flour, meal, lumber, cottons, and other commodities in extensive and constant use in the West Indies. That there is still room for improvement in this trade any one can ascertain by looking up the figures in the Tables of Trade and Navigation for recent years.

Now, these are some of the outlets for trade of which Canada has yet to avail herself, if she would derive all the profit possible from her situation and resources. But they are not all. Our continental line of railway has brought us into commercial