

rights which they have been permitted to usurp. What the treaties did not give them, a *modus vivendi* secured, for a time, and now the colonists are weary of the yoke put upon them, and will not willingly bear it much longer. The report of the Commission is a corroboration of their worst complaints, and for the evils thus recognized a cure must be found. Different suggestions for putting an end to these grievances are made. The principal one is to buy out the French privileges, which have dwindled to a low point in production, the cod fishery on the "French shore" having been ruined, and the lobster fishery, in which the French improvidently disregard a close season, must soon be. Thus the system of bounties, with which the French fishery has been bolstered up, has practically ceased to be of much value, a statement presumably made by the colonists, but in which the French admiral, on the coast, is said to agree. This statement scarcely agrees with the suggestion of the report that the colonists should furnish bait to the French, if the latter will consent to abandon the bounties. Now that the attention of the British public has been called to the facts, we may expect that some means of escape from a position that has become intolerable should be found.

Opposition to imperialism has made its appearance in the United States, notably at Boston and Chicago. Mr. Edward Atkinson, the well-known political economist, has written three pamphlets on the subject, which, judging from their titles, must be spicy morsels. One is entitled "The Cost of a National Crime;" another "The Hell of War and its Penalties;" the third, "Criminal Aggression: by whom Committed." The question of prosecuting the author criminally has been raised, and Attorney-General Griggs is said to have given an opinion that the author is guilty of a crime, punishable by ten years' imprisonment and a fine of \$10,000. The Government refuses to permit the offending pamphlets to pass through the mail. Mr. Atkinson, on his part, calls this an attempt to suppress free speech and withdraw the freedom of the mails. The law applicable to the case is, however, not new. Prosecutions such as that threatened, have in the past been plentiful enough in England, but they generally produced the opposite of the effect intended, and would not now be repeated. If the United States Government should prosecute Mr. Atkinson it could scarcely expect a more favorable result. To do so would be folly and a blunder.

The British Government is reported to have sent to the Transvaal Government something approaching the form and contents of an ultimatum, without quite reaching the gravity which that name would imply. The Transvaal has been reminded by Colonial Secretary Chamberlain of the necessity that lies upon it of living up to its obligations towards Great Britain, as the paramount power. If it be true that a demand has been made for the cancellation of what is known as the dynamite contract, and that President Kruger has met it by a refusal, a crisis would seem to have been reached. Meanwhile, military preparations are going on, on both sides, the Boers being busy in their forts, and Great Britain strengthening herself in that quarter by despatching more troops to the Cape. President Kruger is said to be relying on the aid of the Orange Free State, in case a resort to arms should be the outcome. There is ground of hope, however, that that calamity may be averted. The latest cablegrams represent President Kruger as becoming more reasonable.

With a return of prosperity in the building trades comes a setback in the form of strikes. Anything like a

rush in building puts up the cost beyond the average, and when things fall back, as they are occasionally liable to do, to the average level or even below it, rents become inadequate to pay ordinary interest on the investment. Toronto has in vain, it would seem, passed through an experience of this kind, at least for the purpose of preventing a return to the strikes of former days. Labor unions have for years been calling for arbitration as a remedy, but now the bricklayers in Toronto refuse to refer the question of wages, on which they have struck, to Judge Macdougall. They even declare themselves opposed to arbitration, and especially to accept an arbitrator nominated by the other side. There would be reason in the latter objection if the arbitrator were not official. If they can get higher wages elsewhere than here, they will of course go; and, other things being equal, this would be the real test of the reasonableness or otherwise of their demand. It is desirable that both sides should approach the questions in issue between them in a spirit of reasonable conciliation, otherwise both will suffer, and along with them the general public.

A despatch from Washington states that the belief prevails there that, since the adjournment of the International Commission there has not been shown, on either side, a spirit of concession that would make it worth while for the commission to reassemble. It is not possible to say, at the moment, what value ought to be put on the statement. The United States commissioners are reported to be completely discouraged at the loss of time caused by the passage of communications between Canada and England. It is too soon to complain of the loss of time, since we are nearly three months from the day set for the reassembling of the Commission. What has happened probably is that direct negotiation between the Governments of England and the United States, has practically concluded something with regard to the Alaska frontier, and that the final conclusion awaits the decision of the British Government on some slight modification suggested by Canada. The private interests which would be affected by the Reciprocity negotiations, on both sides, are probably as unreasonable as ever. No doubt they continue to subordinate the public interest to their own hope of private benefit. It has been, from the first, quite plain that if the negotiations were to fail, they would fail from this disastrous cause.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes, though he failed to get the guarantee of the bonds for the construction of railways in Africa, has got from the public the £3,000,000 for which he asked. In spite of the imperialistic fervor which the loan evoked, the Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to shoulder the private burdens of the Chartered Company.

THE BUDGET DEBATE.

As was to be expected, the principal speech in criticism of the Budget, was that of Ex-Financial Minister Foster. He traced the progress of the expenditure:

"The total estimates for the first year were \$39,698,000, for the second year (1897) \$39,282,000, and for 1898—without the second supplementaries—\$40,964,814. The main estimates for 1899-1900, without any supplementary estimates at all, amounted to \$41,528,214. That of itself, incomplete as it was, showed an increase over the total estimates of 1898-9, less the last supplementary estimates, of \$2,403,419. This gave food for thought in the mind of an economical man and a party that had its growth in economy. Adding a proportional amount for supplementary estimates of \$1,838,931, the estimates of the Fin-