

## THE METRIC SYSTEM.

There is an attempted revival in the United States of agitation of the project of a uniform system of weights and measures for all civilized nations. It cannot be said to have attracted a great deal of popular attention as yet, though it is bound to continue to be pressed by progressive men until its final adoption, which is certainly only a question of time. Uniformity in the standards which register amounts and values in the exchanges of commerce is so desirable, and in a more extended system of commerce will be so necessary, that it may be regarded as sure to be ultimately brought about.

Bradstreet's favorably discusses the matter at length, and incidentally brings out many facts of interest in connection with its progress in the United States and elsewhere.

While some of the most important commercial states, as the United States and Great Britain, use one system in their ordinary transactions, they have made another, the metric system, optional, as have some other states, while the great majority of the civilized nations of the world have made the system obligatory. The states which have made the use of the metric system obligatory are Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, the Argentine Republic, France, Italy, Peru, Portugal, Roumania, Servia, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Venezuela. The countries which have made the use of the metric system optional are the United States, Great Britain and Turkey, while the system has not yet been legalized in Russia and Denmark. The weight of authority, so to speak, may therefore be said to be in favor of the adoption of the metric system, and it is this system which is most energetically advocated, and with reason, when the project of a uniform system of weights and measures is discussed. The use of the metric system in the United States has been optional for a long time, but its adoption has been confined mainly to governmental departments and scientific bodies.

There are always difficulties in the way of the adoption of a new system of any kind. At the same time the advantages of the metric system are so great that they bid fair to overcome even the force of long habit. The system in the first place is decimal, and has the advantage for purposes of computation that decimal systems have over others based on a different principle. Again, the metric units of length, bulk, weight, etc., are simply related to each other, a circumstance which gives the system a great advantage over the irregularly related or unrelated units of other systems. Finally, the system has become an international one, and intercourse between nations has increased to such an extent that it is now as important to have the same weights and measures used in different countries as it was a century ago to have the same weights and measures used in different parts of the same country.—*Manitoba Free Press.*

## FARMS AND FARMERS

Comparisons are frequently useful, and especially so when we are told that Canadian interests are bound up with those

of the United States to such an extent that they cannot be severed. God and nature according to a certain school represented by Mr. J. W. Longley, have enjoined them together. It is obvious, therefore, says the *Toronto Empire*, that any advantage to be gained by our farms and farmers under free trade with the States must be similar to those now possessed by the American agriculturist. To claim these privileges, conditions will have to be equalized, and we must be brought up to what the opposition claim to be the fortunate position of our neighboring competitors. If the farmers of both countries were now on a dead level of similarity, free trade or commercial union would be useful; and if our farmers are on a higher level of prosperity than the American it would be injurious. This basis is undeniable, and inferences unanswerable, and the question at once arises as to which is the more prosperous, the Canadian or the American.

Governor Campbell of Ohio observed on October 9 that "year by year farming is growing more unprofitable," while the growth of millionaires proves the existence of many men who have individually added more to their wealth in ten years than has the entire agricultural class of any state in the American union. In 1850 the capitalists in the Republic owned 37½ per cent of her wealth. To-day they own 75 per cent. The cause has been a union of war tariffs and corruption with commercial combinations, trusts and monopolies. As an illustration of this unfortunate tendency to prosper the speculator and schemer at the expense of the farmer, the *Hartford Times* describes a farm of 320 acres in Salem which was worth \$7000 some years ago. A few days ago the whole property and improvements, good farming land and woodland, well fenced and with good buildings, was sold at auction for \$1,400. This speaks for itself. Wealth centering in the hands of a few and being taken away from the hard-working tillers of the soil. The letter recently written to the representatives of Kansas in Congress by the president of the Farmer's Alliance shed further light upon a darksome situation. The wholesale foreclosures of farm mortgages and the consequent threatened extinction of the farming class "to make way for a servile tenantry" is described, while one law firm in Southern Kansas is stated to have a contract to foreclose 1,800 mortgages within a short time. A similar condition exists in Michigan, where the farm mortgages for 1889 are said to amount to over \$64,000,000, and where 50 per cent of the farms are mortgaged with an indebtedness of one half the land value.

The corporation of London, Eng., has voted 2,500 guineas as a wedding present to Prince Albert Victor.

The Canadian Bankers' Association has been formed at Montreal to look after the interests of the banking community.

John I. Ferguson, a bookkeeper in the National Bank of Kansas City, has confessed to the embezzlement of \$20,000.

## VITAL STATISTICS OF AMERICAN JEWS.

The United States government certainly deserves credit for the efforts which it is putting forth to make its census publications as complete and valuable as possible. Almost every feature of social or commercial life which could in any way prove useful or even interesting is being investigated and the statistics thereon tabulated. Bulletin No. 10 deals with the vital statistics of 60,030 Jews, belonging to about 10,000 families. It has long been an accepted axiom that for life assurance Jews are desirable customers and for fire insurance they are undesirable. As a class they are looked upon as healthy, temperate and long lived and the results here shown go far to confirm this opinion. The death rate in this section of the Jewish population was found to be only 7.11 per 1,000. This is remarkably low, the rate in the community as a whole being about 15.8. It is probable, however, that the immigration from Europe during recent years of large numbers of Jews in the prime of life may have somewhat affected this figure, for most of the old and feeble would be left behind, while those who faced the long journey to a foreign country would be middle-aged and robust. But even when all due allowance has been made for this, it must be admitted that the Jews are as a race longer lived than Gentiles among whom they reside. Other interesting points are brought out. The average number of children born to each mother was 4.66. But those mothers who were themselves born in the United States averaged only 3.56 children each, while those born in Russia had 5.63, those from Bohemia 5.44 those from Hungary 5.27, and those from Germany 5.24. This is a significant illustration of the American tendency towards small families.

Points with regard to occupation are also noted. Of 18,115 males reported, only 383 were engaged in agricultural pursuits. There is evidently but little use in trying to make a farmer of the Jew. Commercial pursuits, buying and selling, are his delight, and of his skill in disposing of his property to an unwilling fire insurance company, the managers know but too well.—*Insurance and Finance Chronicle.*

The mail contract with the Allan line has been renewed for a year, Halifax to be the winter port.

The telegraph operators of the Atlantic and Pacific Railway, who went on strike recently, have gained all they demanded.

The mill and plant of the Paterson Sanitary Company at Riverside, N. J., was burned recently. Loss \$65,000; insurance \$15,000.

The Rome correspondent of the *London Standard* says that Austria has offered to mediate between the Vatican and the Quirinal.

The Irwin Bank at Irwin, Pa., has suspended and P. S. Pool & Son, proprietors, have assigned. They say every dollar of liability will be paid.