

navigation? The fact that nearly all the tolls on the canal are derived from lumber is pointed out; but it could not palliate, much less justify serious damage to navigation, if such were really threatened. Must we reconcile ourselves to the destruction of fish in the river, so long as lumbering retains its activity, and trust to its restoration when restoration will be possible?

Once more the government of Manitoba asks to have the land question in that province re-opened, "with the view of securing what is just and equitable in the premises." This question has been dealt with several times, and more than once it was declared "finally" settled. But Premier Greenway contends that the annual grant of \$100,000 a year is not enough. In making the grant there was no rule that could be taken for a positive guide, Manitoba not having a legal right to the lands as the old provinces had. The assertion has been frequently made, on the part of the province, that such right ought to be conceded, and even now Mr. Greenway hints that the rule under which the old provinces were entitled to retain their lands at confederation has some sort of application to Manitoba. His resolution does not, however, either assert the right in direct terms or ask for the lands. What is asked for, in effect, is "better terms" once more. In more than one province the public lands form the principal source of revenue. The lands are alienated for valuable consideration, and there are people who call themselves economists and philanthropists who contend that after the forest and the prairie have been made valuable by the labor of the purchaser, the Government should be at liberty to steal the improved soil back under pretence of taxing it at its full annual value. And while the true principle of taxation is that every one should pay in proportion to his ability, there are people who tell us that the owners of land ought to bear all the taxes, and all the rest of mankind go scot free.

#### THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce, hereafter to be known as the Board of Trade, in its annual report reflects the improved and hopeful tone which, in Nova Scotia, has given place to a spirit of discouragement that at one time threatened to become chronic. This change is not the effect of caprice, but of betterment in the actual condition and prospects of business. "It is cheering to note," we quote textually, "that shipowners again find their property, which had so greatly depreciated, making fair returns, and as a consequence, there is an encouraging revival in our shipyards." Besides, "factories of all kinds have had plenty of work; the sugar refinery had a fairly successful year, the coal and iron mines have greatly increased their output; the returns from the gold mines have been above the average per man of any other gold field,"—beaten the whole world!—"the fisheries, with small exceptions, have been fairly productive, real estate have risen in value, shipowners have reaped a good profit, steam-propelled ships

are increasing, while our agriculturists have had both good crops and good prices." Failures were, in spite of some increase, still below the average.

This picture is one pleasant to look upon, and we congratulate the Haligonians on the happy change which it signalizes. It is not without some slight shades. The West India trade was only fairly remunerative, and some disappointment is felt at the inability largely to increase the exports to these islands. The United States exports to the West Indies are eight times as large as ours, though we can produce many articles as cheap as they can. The truth is, we suspect, that the exports depend largely on the imports; the country that buys most is able to sell most. This fact has been observed in connection with the trade of the West Indies, ever since the United States were admitted to a participation in it on equal terms. The Halifax Chamber of Commerce thinks the solution of the problem lies in free intercourse with these islands, in the form of a reciprocal lowering or remission of duties. Something might be done in this way, but Canada could, under any possible arrangement, take only a small portion of the produce of these islands, and they would still have to seek a market for the remainder. Whether they would improve their chances of doing so by giving differential terms to Canada, is a question which they have shown no disposition to answer in our favor. The United States is the great market to which they desire access, on exceptional terms, if such terms are to be granted at all. We are constantly deluding ourselves on the subject of reciprocity, by cherishing the hope that other countries will grant it, on our own terms, when they show no disposition to do so, or even when they show a decided resolution to do nothing of the kind. Our last attempt to secure reciprocity with the West Indies was a *fiasco*, which we ought not so soon to forget, and which no one can desire to see repeated. The West India trade has, for the last century, been an enigma to all who refuse to understand that the market which the islands most value on this continent is that of the United States.

The report deals in the frankest spirit with the fishery, wisely signalizing defects of method for which a cure is suggested. "It is a fact," so runs the confession, "that all classes of fish caught by our fishermen are in many cases badly handled from the beginning, and particularly fat herring and mackerel, which in many cases are allowed to lie too long before being taken from the nets before being gutted and salted." For fat herrings, inferior packages are used, and the inspection is so managed as to promote deceptions, barrel heads, apart from the barrels and their contents, being branded for one class and then used for another. Poor herrings caught after the 4th of September are deemed fit only for export to the West Indies. The fat herring, caught in July, go to the United States. A stringent law for the inspection of fish and packages is called for, and it is contended that all barrels not up to the standard should be destroyed. When made of unseasoned

wood they cannot be kept tight. It is not that the Nova Scotia fishermen do not understand their business; "they can cure fish as well as any other nation, but have allowed themselves to drop into a careless way, forgetting that if they bring to market a superior article they would obtain a price commensurate." This signalizing of the faults of the fishermen ought to lead to amendment. It is creditable to the Chamber of Commerce that it has pointed out a weak spot in the great industry of Nova Scotia, and called for an appropriate remedy. It is possible that the West India trade of the Provinces may have been injured by the shipment there of inferior herring, sent perhaps in poor packages to a hot climate. If the Nova Scotia fishermen know the best methods of curing herring, nothing can be expected, in this particular, from the fishery commission which visited Holland to gain information, among other things, of the method of curing herring in vogue there. The Dutch method long gained for Dutch herrings a preference in the markets of the world, though it is natural that in the course of time the secret, if secret there were, should become common property. At any rate, the Chamber of Commerce thinks it was a wise thing to send the Commission to Holland.

Nova Scotia is encouraged to look forward to the time when the building of iron ships will become a regular industry there. "In our fleet under steam," the report reads, "we have not only steamships doing good service as coasters, but first-class Clyde-built boats sailing to Jamaica, Cuba, Newfoundland, and ports in the United States. A few decades hence our Province will probably count as one of its most important industries the building of iron ships"—the development of the iron industry pointing in that direction. The recent completion of the dry dock at Halifax is an achievement of which the city has just reason to be proud, more especially as an annual bonus of \$10,000 for twenty years was advanced by the corporation for the construction. Whether the amount be repaid by the Dominion or not, the achievement of the work signalizes a spirit of self-help which speaks well for the energy of the people of Halifax, and is a guarantee for its future advance. That future we regarded as brilliant, even when the Haligonians themselves seemed tempted to despair; and we welcome as a good augury the spirit of cheerful hope by which they are now animated.

#### TRADE IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

The general review of trade in the Province of Quebec, made by Mr. J. S. Bousquet, the cashier, on the occasion of the annual meeting of La Banque du Peuple in Montreal last week, is worthy of perusal. As the oldest of the French banks, having agencies on both sides of the St. Lawrence, the institution of which he is cashier has good opportunities of knowing the state of affairs in the province, and of feeling, as it were, the pulsations of business at different points.