

A contract was signed in London a few days ago by which the British Government subsidizes the Jamaica Fruit and Produce Association with £10,000 annually for five years, the association undertaking to establish a direct fortnightly fruit and passenger line of steamers, to make fifteen knots, between Jamaica and the United Kingdom, commencing May, 1900. The association also contracts to improve the wharfage at Kingston and elsewhere, to build hotels, and to push the fruit industry. The Imperial Government pays half of the subsidy.

According to figures compiled by the United States Government, that country has recently exported to the Philippines paper and paper manufactures valued at \$387,031, which, in comparison with other figures, represents an increase in quantity and a decrease in value. The commerce of the United States with the islands was 10.38 per cent. of the whole.

No other journal in Canada gives in detail and extenso the possibilities of our foreign trade as *THE CANADIAN MANUFACTURER*. Being the organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, a large portion of its space is devoted to giving information in the direction indicated, obtained from official and other reliable sources. Subscription \$1.00 per year.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act of New Zealand is one, the operation of which deserves the most careful watching from other colonies. A new development has been the formation in Christchurch by the retail grocers' assistants of a union, which brought before the Conciliation Board, in the form of an industrial dispute, the conditions as to the hours of work and rate of pay. The Conciliation Board, after taking evidence, was about to make recommendations in the matter when the master grocers intervened by raising the question whether the Grocers' Assistants' Union was a proper union under the Act, and whether the retail grocery trade can be regarded as an industry under the Act. These points will have to be settled by the President of the Arbitration Court, the court of appeal from the Conciliation Board.—Australian Ironmonger.

The United States Government is evidently taking a keen interest in the shipping industry of the Dominion. Consul-General Bittinger, at Montreal, has received instructions from Washington to prepare at once and forward to the United States Marine Department a statistical report of the maritime condition at Montreal. The letter asks for a report on the number of vessels now there from all countries, and the average number of vessels daily lying at that port; the amount of money received for Customs, on the value of products received from other countries, and also shipped abroad; the facilities for docking and the general condition of the harbor. One section of the letter dwells upon the ship-building industry, and asks for a full report upon the facilities for building war craft. The letter also asks for a report upon the defences, if any, in case of war, and the nearest American seaport town to each Canadian city with a deep sea harbor. The files of the Marine and Fisheries Department at Ottawa will be, we are told, looked through by Mr. Bittinger for statistics, regarding the shipping industry of Quebec province.

The representatives of the various countries stationed at Montreal will be asked to furnish a report on the merchant marine of their countries docking at Canadian ports. The Marine and Fisheries Department will be consulted upon the defences, and well-known commanders of vessels in the habit of entering the ports will be asked to make a comparison upon the marine of the United States and other countries.

People outside New South Wales believe that federation, accompanying inter-colonial free trade, will mean the establishment of many new factories, especially in that colony where the coal is close to deep water. The first definite indication of this movement comes this month, when we learn that a large iron foundry in the Newcastle district which has been closed for some years has been taken on a long lease by a South Australian iron founder. We are firmly convinced that this is but the first of a long series of similar transactions. It is rumored also that the Massey-Harris Co. contemplate starting large agricultural machinery works between Newcastle and Sydney.—Australian Ironmonger.

A concern has recently been organized in North Dakota known as the Northwestern Tow, Twine and Fiber Company, which proposes to establish several tow mills throughout North Dakota, and later to erect a big fiber mill to consume the product of the tow mills. The works are to be located in the Red River Valley, where flax has been successfully raised during the past few years, and they propose to handle the product of 5,000 acres of flax annually. They do not intend to turn out any finished goods, but propose to utilize flax straw, which has heretofore gone to waste, for the manufacture of fiber, and they own and control a patent process for threshing the straw without injury to the fiber. The straw, as grown at the present time, will not make the very highest grade of fiber, but will make a fiber that can be manufactured into twine and coarser products. Thousands of acres of Canadian lands are quite as well adapted to this industry as those of Dakota, and Canadian capital and enterprise should be quick to take the hint above given.

At a recent meeting of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers Mr. George H. Webster read a paper on "The Inland Waterways of Northwestern Canada," which bore evidence of careful preparation. The paper offers a solution of the problem of the stimulation of Canadian trade in grain and other commodities. Mr. Webster says in part: "Is there no way of reaching a solution of a difficulty, one that will lead to a general lowering of freight rates between points far west of Winnipeg and the lakes?" The writer ventures to say that there is, and that this solution is to be found in the development of navigation on the numerous rivers and lakes between Lake Superior and the far west; in other words the writer believes that a magnificent system of waterways is capable of being opened, at a reasonable cost, that will reach from the lakes to the farthest bounds of the rich prairies of Manitoba and the territories. We have been singularly favored in possibilities in this respect. Probably no such extensive territory in the world, apart from the St. Lawrence and Mississippi valleys, is possessed of such advantages for