

of the world are said to be suffering from late frosts and later rains. In France the crop promises so poorly that the people are agitating the subject of the repeal of the import duty on wheat, and the Government is said to look with favor on the measure. Our own decrease in the visible and the supposed short interest in the speculative market are also factors at the moment. Henry Clews regards the situation as somewhat similar to that existing in 1867, when wheat sold at \$3.50 a bushel, though gold was at a premium.

—Navigation is open at Montreal. So is it on the River St. John in New Brunswick. Five steamers of the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Company came into Montreal harbor on Saturday, and a steamer is loading there for St. Johns, Newfoundland. The Laprairie and Longueuil ferry boats have begun to run. A jam still exists in the ice at Grand Ile, however, and no ocean steamer will arrive for some days. The dates of steamers leaving are about as under: "Sardinian" and "Lake Huron," for Liverpool, May 6; "Toronto," for Liverpool, May 7; "Aloides," for Glasgow, May 6; "Sarmatian," for Glasgow, May 9; "Fremona," for London, May 6; "Grecian," for London, May 7; "Ontario," for Bristol, May 10; "Picknuben," for Hamburg and Antwerp, May 12; "Cuban," for Charlottetown, P. E. I., St. Johns, Nfld., and Sydney, C. B., May 7, and "Miramichi," for the lower ports, April 27.

—Having attained to its majority, the Ontario Mutual Life Insurance Company takes a look backward to see what it has accomplished in its twenty years' growth. At the end of the company's first year the income was \$9,598, at the close of 1890 it stood at \$489,858. Assets in 1870 amounted to only \$6,216, last year they spread out into seven figures, \$1,711,686. The aggregate of assurance in force shows remarkable growth from \$521,650 twenty years ago to \$13,710,800 in 1890. There is fair room for congratulation in such progress as is shown by these figures. A further feature which deserves to be called to the attention of intending assurers is the \$1,558,960 reserved as security for policy-holders, and \$134,066 surplus over all liabilities.

At the weekly meeting of the Montreal Board of Trade yesterday, the chairman of the building committee submitted an estimate showing a revenue of \$45,000 per annum from the building with all the offices let, and he thought it would be safe to calculate on a net revenue of at least \$30,000 for the first year. The estimated cost of the new building, complete with all equipments, even to electric lights, was little less than \$500,000. It is proposed to issue 5 per cent. bonds for this amount of \$500,000. It was proposed to name as trustees during their respective terms of office the president of the Bank of Montreal, the president of the City and District Savings Bank, and the president of the Board of Trade.

—The United States Secretary of the Treasury expresses his intention to put in operation as soon as possible the plan to distribute the \$21,000,000 in subsidiary coin. He believes that he will have the co-operation of the banks of deposit, and thinks the subsidiary coin would take the place of silver dollars in making change. He believes that most of the banks will accept from \$200 to \$300 at a time in this coin.

—Lieutenant Wise, who has examined and reported on the Panama Canal, estimates that the work could be completed within five years, at a cost of 600,000,000 francs. Speedy action would be necessary to save from destruction what has already been done. We may expect that a definite attempt to raise the capital will be made, and on its success will depend the fate of this great work, so extravagantly conceived and recklessly conducted.

—The rumor of an intention on the part of the Canadian Pacific to complete a new line from St. Paul to Regina, and abandon the section north of the lakes, is denied by President Van Horne.

—The dividend of the Bank of Montreal for the current six months is announced at the customary rate of ten per cent. per annum.

—The Canadian Bank of Commerce declares a dividend for the current half year at the rate of seven per cent. per annum.

—A dividend at the rate of seven per cent. has been declared for the current half year by the Merchants Bank of Canada.

—The directors of the Ontario Bank announce a semi-annual dividend of three-and-a-half per cent.

—A dividend of four per cent. is declared by the Bank of Hamilton for the half-year now current.

—It is announced that a dividend at the rate of seven per cent per annum upon the paid-up capital of the Commercial Bank of Manitoba, is declared.

Correspondence.

TRADE RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN.

Editor MONETARY TIMES:

Sir,—In your editorial note recording the Board of Trade meeting to discuss this important topic, you ask, "What do the colonies propose to give in return?" i.e., for favored treatment in regard to imports of food products into Britain, and you further ask, "What good would such a duty do the colonies if it did not raise the price of 'food products?'"

Economic questions are discussed in the political press with disingenuousness, straining to make a small local fact cover a large general conclusion, and unfortunately this habit is not confined to one side or the other.

But from your journal we are accustomed to receive opinions formed in a more judicial spirit, which by their sincerity command respect, and which convey the idea that the honest expression of contrary beliefs will not be suppressed or slighted.

Believing then that your questions were intended to elicit an answer, and knowing at the same time how inadequately a few short sentences can set forth so great a subject, the following is given as an indication of the lines on which enquiry should proceed, and not at all as a detail of the steps by which the conclusion is reached.

I am a protectionist, believing that producers, such as women, bear and rear children, and thus reproduce population; as men, they support all departments of the State—food, raiment, shelter, civil government and foreign defence are provided by their efforts. They pay all the taxes, and before a foreign producer comes into the market to compete against a home product, his foreign product should pay something by way of Customs duty equal, or a little more than, the sum of the taxes which would be levied indirectly on the home-product.

Lord Beaconsfield's saying, delivered in 1842, is true and to the point, "Free importation is but the half of free trade, and the worse half."

Mr. Jaffray, Mr. Bertram and Mr. Baillie, at the Board of Trade meeting, and others elsewhere, assume that the fiscal policy of Great Britain is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that her people and statesmen would see her manufactures transferred to rivals, her commerce decay, her farming lands lie waste, and imperial power slip from her grasp, rather than give up what has been called the "free trade superstition." Those in favor of strengthening the cords of material interest which bind us to the Mother Country point out that the consumption of British manufactures per capita is much greater in the colonies than in foreign countries, and that increase of population and development of resources mean not only increase of trade but augmented strength in every way. Canada in particular has in the immense area of fertile lands in Manitoba and the North-West the possibility of becoming the granary of the Empire; any temporary sacrifice, if such should be needed, would be amply repaid by the sense of security arising from having her source of supply within the Empire rather than being dependent on competitors, and possibly antagonists. All the arguments in favor of reciprocity in farm and natural products with the United States, apply with tenfold force to a compact with Great Britain.

The reason why it is believed that a differential duty would not permanently raise the price of breadstuffs in Britain, is that, commanding the markets of the world, her wants would be drawn, in the first place, from points against which no duties would be charged. Their production would be stimulated, and the means of a return trade created. Canada, India, South Africa, and Australia can produce wheat and lay it down in the British markets as cheaply as France, Germany, Austria, Russia or the United States, and colonial competition would compel these latter countries to accept colonial prices, minus the duty.

The doctrine that in all cases the consumer pays the duty is not tenable; if it were, why should we feel that the McKinley tariff is injurious to Canadian trade. What we do know is that it was intended to develop interstate commerce by shutting out Canadian products. It does not change from winter to summer in a day, and statesmen must look a long way ahead to see the ultimate effect of a given policy.

It seems certain that, after long trial, so-called free trade has utterly failed to produce the effects expected from it; and, however advantageous when first adopted, it has brought Britain to the condition of a capitalist living on his capital, unable to produce food or occupation for his children; forced to send them abroad to become, under one set of conditions, aliens, competitors, or enemies, under another, friends, aliens and supporters. Even if the initial steps to secure the latter result should cause a slight temporary increase in the cost of imported supplies of food, the expenditure would be more satisfactory than that incurred for fleets and armies.

In Canada, India, the Cape and Australia, development of agricultural resources would lighten the burden of debt for works which have been carried out to the advantage of the Empire at large, and vastly increase British commerce.

Yours respectfully,

R. W. ELLIOT.

Toronto, April 20th, 1891.

[Mr. Elliot states his case well. But to show how little chance there is of Great Britain adopting any such proposal as has been hinted at, it may be sufficient for the present to print, as we do elsewhere, a part of the speech of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer a few weeks ago. Ed. M. T.]

—A large block of wooden buildings in the Chinatown of Victoria, B.C., has been burned by order of the city council to make room for a new public market. It was deemed advisable to get rid of the old rookeries in this way instead of by removal, so as to avoid all danger of sickness. The Chinese theatre was among the buildings burned.