

insinuations were published, it had been positively stated, although in our opinion the statement was quite unnecessary, that the financial agents had received the customary commission for placing the present loan that they received on all other occasions during a period extending now to nearly half a century. The *Mail* repeats the assertion that, when the last loan was negotiated, Canada 4 per cent. bonds were selling at 94½. There is certainly a *suppressio veri* in this statement. The dividends on Canada 4 are payable in May and November. The last loan was placed on the 7th November. Now the quotation 94½ must have included the 2 per cent. dividend due on the 1st November; so that the fair market rate was only 92½; and we find that, on the 18th November, the quotation in the *London Economist* for Canada 4 was 91 to 92, and the latest quotations have been 91½ to 92½, including ½ per cent. interest. We have endeavored to discuss the terms of this loan with strict impartiality, fully assured that the more it is investigated the more will all right-thinking people be convinced that the less our public loans are made the subject of hostile criticism by partizan newspapers the better will it be for the general interests of the Dominion.

MUNICIPAL TAXATION EXEMPTION.

Perhaps no subject is occupying more of the public attention both in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec than the exemptions from municipal taxation authorized by law. This is one of those questions in which we in the Province of Quebec can hardly hope to take the lead; indeed, there is grave reason to apprehend that even if the reform earnestly desired by large classes of the population were to be accomplished in the sister province, the Legislature of Quebec would refuse to follow such an example. There are, no doubt, many plausible arguments in favor of exempting edifices constructed for religious or charitable purposes from ordinary taxation. With regard to charitable institutions especially, the local contributions for their support are so inadequate that it is found necessary to have supplementary aid granted from the general revenue of the Province. The amount of the taxes from which these institutions are relieved is, no doubt, a burden on the population at large, but after all it is a small burden on the masses, and it must be borne in mind that the voluntary contributions in aid of those institutions are made chiefly by a small minority of the population. We should be very glad indeed if it were possible

that a compromise could be arrived at on this question. All land might be assessed at its value, but the buildings when used for religious or charitable purposes might be exempted. It often happens that unoccupied land attached to and contiguous to buildings occupied for the purposes which we have indicated escape taxation, and are held on speculation to the injury of enterprising persons residing in the locality. This seems to us a much more substantial grievance than the exemption of edifices from taxation. While on the subject of municipal taxation we may notice the complaints regarding the enforcement of the water rates. It is quite possible that in a large city like this the cutting off of the water supply may operate severely on individuals, but the remedy, it appears to us, is to establish public pumps in convenient localities for the poor, but to enforce the collection of the water rates with rigor on those who take water in their houses. And there ought to be no exemptions from this rate. The city has incurred a considerable debt in order to supply water in abundance to the citizens, and the water rates are merely sufficient to defray the cost. If the water were furnished as it is in many other cities, and as it was once in Montreal, by a private company, the collection of the rates would be rigorously enforced, and most assuredly the same rules should be applied by the corporation, which is a trustee for the citizens.

BUTTER AND CHEESE TRADE IN CANADA.

REVIEW FOR 1876.

While the history of the operations of 1876 in these two important branches of Canadian enterprise is fresh in the memory of the trade, we propose to record the facts in our columns. The year 1876 will be remembered as one in which the business in butter and cheese was conducted on sound business principles; both are perishable goods, and hence are regarded as unusually risky commodities to handle in a speculative way. Great Britain is our principal consuming customer, and the United States, France, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and Germany our principal competitors; all these, save the United States, have the "inside track" in the butter trade. In cheese the trade is mainly in the hands of the United States and Canada, and the competition is a fair one between these countries, so far as climate and distance is concerned; but, so far as prestige and experience goes, the Americans had an advantage, which it is not too much to say they are yearly losing. The position

taken by Canadian cheese factories at the Centennial, especially by the exhibitors from the county of Oxford, has been such as to justify pride in our country, and compel Brother Jonathan to look well to his laurels.

So much by way of introduction,—we shall now review each item separately.

BUTTER.

The season commenced late, stocks were unusually light when new butter first made its appearance, the English market was also very bare, and prices went out high for old butter, and, as a consequence, new butter opened dearer than for several years here and in Britain.

The spring was late and cold, and the production and consumptive demand kept pace with each other, prices gradually dropping, leaving no loss to dealers. In June prices reached the lowest point, as shown by our table of prices current for each week, beginning with the month of May. As the summer wore on unusual heat was experienced,—pastures were burnt brown, and it was almost impossible to make or keep the article when made, and much anxiety was felt by all who were handling butter. Dry and hot weather prevailed in Europe, and orders came from England earlier than usual. Canadian holders shewed the best judgment (in our opinion) at this point they have done for many years, by seizing the opportunity to sell their summer-made butter at a good price in July and August, instead of being carried away with the cry, no pasture, no butter, high prices, and the result was that, when September came in with fine rains, restoring the pastures, Canada was well cleared of her summer-made butter which had gone into consumption and was out of the way, here and in England.

September opened with Townships butter worth 21 to 22c; Brockville and Morrisburgh 20 to 21. From this point the price gradually advanced to 26 and 28 for fine Township, and 2c. less for choice Morrisburgh and Brockville. Though the market was strong right through the fall, there was a commendable absence of rash speculation, buyers were met at a good profit with fresh butter, and the season wound up with a small stock left on hand on the 31st December. It will be noticed we have written almost exclusively thus far about butter made east of Kingston, but we should be deserving of censure if we failed to note the marked improvement which has been made this year in Western Ontario. It only requires the display of spirit and enterprise of our American Railway men, in furnishing refrigerator cars, by our Canadian railway authorities to