Municipal corruption is rife in the neighboring Republic, and if anything of the same kind exists here, it is proper that it should be discovered and put a stop to.

Steam communication between France and Canada finds advocates chiefly in Montreal. A previous venture of this kind was not notably successful. A new contract has been entered into by the Canadian Government with Brossiere Brothers, of Paris, who, for a subsidy of $50,000 a year, undertake to provide a fortnightly steam service between France and Canada, Montreal to be the summer and Halifax the winter port. The vessels will touch at St. Pierre and Miquelon, French islands in the Gulf, at an English port, and in winter at an American port. Arrangements for running a line of steamers between Halifax and the West Indies have not yet been made, and appear to be in some measure dependent upon the commercial arrangements which Sir Charles Tupper may be able to make with Spain.

The returns received by the Boston *Post* from the leading Clearing Houses of the United States, make the total clearings last week in thirty-six cities, $950,789,024 against $861,896,036 in 1886, an increase of ten per cent. over the previous week. The clearings at thirty-five cities outside of New York show a gain of 13.2 per cent., against a gain of 13.9 per cent. the previous week. The total is $347,109,463 against $306,724,759 last year. Out of thirty-eight reporting cities, all but four show a percentage of increase over the corresponding week of last year. The showing is a favorable one. A further large increase in the surplus reserve is shown by the bank statement issued last Saturday, says the New York *Shipping List*, and the changes that took place last week are generally of a favorable character. The conservative policy of the banks is shown by a contraction of $1,686,000 in loans, and a freer movement of currency from the interior is found in the increase of $14,198,400 in currency. Compared with the previous week, specie increased $227,700, and deposits fell off $590,200. The exchanges resulted in an increase in surplus reserve, to $7,226,100, against $6,352,450 the week previous.

THE WASHINGTON SURPLUS.

Among the schemes for the disposal of the large surplus, now in the Federal Treasury, at Washington, is one by Mr. Edward L. Andrews, of New York. Mr. Andrews proposes to distribute the surplus among the States in proportion to their congressional representation; and in the case of defaulting States, he would pay the money to creditors, among whom the Federal Government ranks first. In this way the Federal Government would provide the means of paying a debt to itself, that is, it would pay with one hand and receive with the other. There is not much temptation in this part of the proposal. Individual creditors and creditor States will of course say amen to Mr. Andrews' scheme of distribution. It is not improbable therefore that the proposed scramble will find some advocates in Congress. Last session, the Senate of the United States passed a bill providing for the distribution among the States of about fifteen millions, so that one branch of Congress is committed to distribution, on a limited scale. It is not probable, however, that any such measure will pass both Houses. Congress, though it has so far failed to exhaust the surplus by appropriations, would almost certainly prefer to dispose of the money itself rather than make it a present to the several States or their creditors.

The dangers that lie in this measure are easily seen. Distribution would fasten the war tariff, now no longer necessary, on the neck of the nation for an indefinite period. It would give each State a supposed if false interest in the maintenance of a tariff not justified by Federal necessities. It would lay the foundation of a system of State subsidies, similar to that which constitutes one of the great dangers to the Dominion of Canada. The States would become corrupted, and quarrels over the distribution would arise. To begin with, the repudiating States would object to the compulsory process by which their debts would be paid. Great evil would arise from the enjoyment of revenue by States which had not the responsibility of raising it. The donor would be blamed by recipients of his bounty for the way in which he got the means of subsidizing them; and while they blamed they would object to have the source of the subsidies dried up and the subsidies discontinued. This is no fancy picture; its occurrence would be a faithful reproduction of what the subsidy system in Canada has produced.

The mistake made by Congress, last session, was in not reducing the tariff, to bring it into harmony with the requirements of the country. For this inaction, it is impossible to plead any valid excuse. Distribution would be a substitute for reduction; and the high tariff men would know how to make the most of their opportunity. The distribution which took place under the administration of General Jackson was made at a time when the protectionist element was much weaker than at present. It is this fact which makes distribution much more dangerous now than it was then.

FORCING THE SEASON.

A subscriber in the Province of Quebec, writing to this journal on the trade situation, makes the following remark *en passant*, with respect to the premature dates at which travellers are sent out, in Canada: "It strikes me as absurd to see salesmen trying to peddle out Christmas goods in midsummer. What good does it do to "hurry up" matters and try to change God's seasons in the way our wholesale dealers are doing? I believe it does no one any good but everybody harm. If retail merchants generally were to discourage this sort of thing and turn the cold shoulder to these too early visitors, depend upon it the movement would result to the good of the trade generally."

We agree with our subscriber as to the absurdity of the practice which induces wholesale men to begin selling fall and winter goods in June and July or spring goods before Christmas time. Assuredly it does harm; it tends to over-buying, to overlapping of credits, and perpetuates confusion and feverishness in trade by piling up unseasonable goods and increasing the risk of dead stock. It would indeed be a good thing if retailers as a rule would "stiffen their backbones" to resist this or other seductive methods of the restless importer and his still more restless and insistent travelling salesman. In this matter and the even more wretched system of dating-forward, it would be a pleasant surprise to see amendment come from the retailers' side, for indeed it seems hopeless to look to the wholesale houses to alter these pernicious practices.

THE COTTON TRADE.

A very cheerful, not to say sanguine view of the present condition of the industry of cotton manufacture in the United States is taken by the *Textile Record*, of Philadelphia. That journal declares that the industry is at present in better condition than it has been for several years. Both north and south the mills are fully employed, the demand is much more vigorous than it was at this time last year, prices have advanced somewhat, and the product is taken freely by the country. "This satisfactory state of affairs deserves especial comment because of the conclusive manner in which it refutes the oft-repeated assertions heard during the past few years, that the southern cotton mills were destroying the business of the northern mills, that there was enormous overproduction of cotton fabrics, and that there was no hope for the American cotton trade unless it could manage to push its products more largely into foreign countries. All these propositions are overthrown by the actual facts as they exist to-day."

The *Record* asserts very strenuously that there is no over-production in cotton fabrics in the States, and, further, that the mills now standing are not more than equal to the task of supplying the normal wants of the people of the country, which is increasing its population very fast.

—Italian and Greek wines continue to be imported into France, and a cablegram assumes that, in a short time, they are exported as pure Bordeaux or Burgundy. This may or may not be true. Much of the foreign wine imported into France is consumed there; some is married to French wine, and the result whatever it may be, is not a pure French article. There is danger that the French wine trade may suffer by practices which rivals are too ready to unearth and condemn, though they are themselves often more guilty than those whom they accuse. Sparkling wine made in Germany is misnamed champagne. In fact, there is a tendency, intelligible enough but not the less condemnable, to call a new wine by an old and favorite name. Thus we hear of Canadian clarets and even Canadian ports. Whatever the merits of these wines may be, they are certainly neither clarets nor ports. They ought to be given new and independent names.