

ESTABLISHED 1866

The Monetary Times

TRADE REVIEW
AND INSURANCE CHRONICLE

With which has been incorporated the INTERCOLONIAL JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, of Montreal (in 1869), the TRADE REVIEW, of the same city (in 1870), and the TORONTO JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

Issued every Friday morning.

SUBSCRIPTION—POST PAID.

CANADIAN SUBSCRIBERS	-	\$2.00 PER YEAR.
BRITISH	-	10s. 6d. STER. PER YEAR.
AMERICAN	-	\$2.00 U.S. CURRENCY.
SINGLE COPIES,	-	10 CENTS.

BOOK & JOB PRINTING A SPECIALTY.

PUBLISHED BY THE

MONETARY TIMES PRINTING COMPANY OF CANADA,
LIMITED.

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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, FEB. 19, 1892

THE SITUATION.

No official report of the mission of the Canadian reciprocity delegates to Washington need be expected till Parliament meets. In the meantime, the statement is made, in different quarters, that the visit has been fruitless. If by this is meant that no binding agreement has been come to, it may be accepted, for the conferences were undoubtedly of a tentative nature. The reports generally given in the American press are characterized by our representatives as being generally incorrect, and of course this will be equally true of them when adopted in Canada. Full justice is done by them to Mr. Blaine's courtesy and frankness. The statement may be broadly made that our delegates could have had no mission to treat for a limited reciprocity; in other words, to undertake that Canada should protect American manufactures against British, French, German, and those of all other countries. The general election last year was a decision of the electorate against this form of protection, and the record is being strengthened by the by-elections. Canada is in favor of a reasonable measure of reciprocity with the Republic, but she is not prepared to prefer and protect American manufactures against those of all other countries, to her own great injury.

At last the final reports of the commissioners in the Baie des Chaleurs scandal have been given to the public. Chief Justice Jette reports separately, and though he treats the Pacaud-Armstrong transaction as entirely indefensible, he does not think that M. Mercier was cognizant of it. He equally exonerates the other members of the Government, except M. Robideaux, whose suspicion he thinks ought to have been excited by the attempt made by Pacaud to get him to secure the discount of a \$20,000 note. When stricken by Grippe, in December, Chief Justice Jette suggested that his colleagues should draw up an inte-

rim report, which he might discuss with them; but he afterwards abandoned this idea, though they acted upon the suggestion. When he saw the draft he was not able to agree with it, and he was too weak to discuss it. The majority report implicates M. Mercier in the Pacaud-Armstrong transaction to the extent of concluding that the payment by Pacaud of notes in which the ex-Premier was responsible came out of \$100,000 which went to the credit of the toll-gate keeper. It is admitted that proof is wanting to show that M. Mercier was cognizant of the Armstrong-Pacaud arrangement. M. Garneau is represented as yielding to pressure and going farther than he was legally authorized to do, although he is credited with acting in good faith.

A proposal to secure reciprocity in giving effect to judgments between Great Britain and the colonies is now under consideration. It originated with the colonial conference in 1888, and counsel was employed to prepare a bill by which it might be carried into effect. The State Department at Ottawa having received communication of the proposal, forwards it to the Local Governments, which, having cognizance of "Property and civil rights," have a right of decision in the premises. The judgments to be mutually adopted would be confined to those rendered by Superior Courts; ultimately the reciprocity might be extended inter-colonially. Among the effects of the acceptance of such a measure would be a saving of time and money in giving effect in one part of the Empire to judgments rendered in another; and we are not aware that any solid objection could weigh against the advantage of the facility and economy that would be gained. Such a measure would find its most active operation in connection with the collection of debts, in respect to which creditors in all parts of the Empire are entitled to every reasonable aid from other parts. At first blush, it looks as if the proposal should stand a good chance of being favorably entertained.

Again the alarm is sounded that danger exists of Canadian cattle being scheduled in England, though the outbreak of foot and mouth disease there, or the scheduling of cattle from the north of Europe, does not present an adequate reason for adverse action. There is a side to the Canadian cattle trade which is kept carefully out of view. Doubt has often been expressed by competent judges whether it pays to raise stock cattle to send to England to be fed; that it pays better to send fat cattle is generally admitted. But is this the best use which can be made of fat cattle? During the discussion of the bill to admit American cattle to slaughter in Canada, last session, Sir John Thompson stated that, where cattle are slaughtered in large establishments like the Armour's, at Chicago, every part of the animal, including much that is wasted in isolated butchering, being utilized, the product sold for considerably more than twice the amount paid for the animals. Here is a source of profit far beyond the average, which

Canada is foregoing. It is clear that by doing so, she is suffering a great annual loss. The time must come when we shall have to change our methods; our western ranches, if nothing else, will make this necessary. Meanwhile, it would be wise for the Government to take power to charter a company adequate to do this work, even if it were held as a reserve for some time; a force that could be used in the event of our cattle being scheduled, for example.

British Columbia has a strong conviction that the low rating of the census of last year does it injustice, and its Government appeals to Ottawa to obtain a recount. Apparently the province is willing to share the expense of the operation, for it is willing that the work should be done on terms that would be satisfactory to both Governments. One difficulty about granting the request would be that, the door once opened, similar demands would come from other quarters. Some of the grounds on which the demand is rested are weak and others clearly fallacious. Twelve thousand is thought too small an increase for the Indian population during the decade, though according to all experience, it would seem to be ample; the fate of the Indian population everywhere is to decrease, and it would be something new if a different result be found in British Columbia. There has been an increase in the imports out of all proportion with that of population; but that this is mainly through trade does not admit of a question. The civic census in Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster, taken last year, seems to show that these places were underrated by the Dominion counting; but if the local authorities have faith in their own figures, they are entitled to all the consolation that can be drawn from the conviction that they are more numerous than the Ottawa officials credited them with being.

It is nothing new for the Roman Catholic episcopate of Quebec to denounce bribery and intemperance in elections, but this time it is done with unwonted emphasis. It cannot be said that the mandement signed by all the bishops, and read in the churches last Sunday, leans more to one party than another. But to the liquor law the bishops virtually seek to add a new clause, by virtue of their spiritual authority. The civil law requires taverns to close on the day of election; the bishops forbid the selling of liquor three days prior to the election and three days after; and they denounce disobedience to this command "as a grievous sin, which we make a case especially reserved, the absolution from which cannot be had but from us alone or our vicars-general." The object is good, and there will be a general disposition to allow the bishops considerable latitude, on that account, but the means are such as are not recognized by the civil law, for following which it is doubtful whether any one could be punished in the way proposed. The case is one which presents a clashing of civil and ecclesiastical authority, though the civil authority is not likely to object of its own motion; but if the hotel-keepers stand on their legal rights, the courts