

The *Bulletin* continuing says:—

"Comptroller Dawes appreciates the fact that an American bank with authority to create branches in the dependencies is almost essential if exchange is not to be conducted through London at a heavy cost to American exporters, and with a direct advantage to their foreign competitors. The present banking supremacy of Great Britain is due in a considerable measure to these banks, and to the system of credits which they are able to extend to foreign purchasers from British manufacturers and exporters.

* * *

"If branch banking is proposed, it may be necessary to limit the branches in the United States to a few commercial cities and to continue the prohibition of branches except for banks having foreign or colonial connections. The Treasury officials are not disposed to involve the question of branch banking at home with that of branches abroad except so far as branches are required in connection with foreign business. If complete revision of the monetary system is proposed which will secure branches at the discretion of the banks both at home and abroad, the plan may not encounter opposition at the Treasury, but there will be a desire to avoid delay in equipping American bankers to compete with their foreign rivals for the trade of the Pacific."

As the International American Bank is asking Congress for a charter to enable them to conduct business in the chief cities of Europe, and may now desire to open a branch in the Pacific, it is not easy to understand why it may be necessary to prohibit branches to any national bank desiring to open same. If any thorough revision of the banking system of the United States in being seriously contemplated, the offices of Canadian banks in New York, Chicago and San Francisco will be good object lessons as to the method of operating branch banks.

SOME COMMENTS ON CIVIC AFFAIRS.

Nearly every citizen of Montreal has probably felt at some time or other that, if he had the control of affairs at the City Hall, they would be better managed. In nearly all cases he is right. There are few businesses that cannot be better run by a one man power than by a debating society; and, if there are exceptions to this rule, civic administration is certainly not one of them. Of course, it is important to get the right men, but almost any man of ordinary average common sense could run the Health Department, for instance, better than it is run by the Health Committee. There must be very few big businesses in Montreal that would be improved by increasing the number of managers. Even the aldermen seem to appreciate this point, judging by the way in which they have received the proposition for placing the civic administration in the hands of a board of civic commissioners. The tax-payers have long seemed to favor the idea of having salaried commissioners. The aldermen do not, however, yet seem to have risen to the idea of making a broad distinction between the legislative

functions which should appertain to themselves, and the administrative functions which should properly be entrusted to commissioners. All the schemes mooted at the City Hall appear to involve a rather divided control. Some of the aldermen seem to want the commissioners to be aldermen, or to be the creatures of the aldermen, or responsible to the aldermen, or under the control of the aldermen. The adoption of any of these systems would simply make it easier to bring improper influences to bear upon the civic administration. It is easier to influence two or three men than it is twenty or thirty. What is needed is to put the control of the city into the hands of a few well-paid permanent officials, whose interest it will be to please the people of Montreal. There is no motive so powerful as intelligent self-interest. Our commissioners ought to be so well paid that their chief personal interest should be to retain the good opinion of the citizens, and by so doing to retain their offices.

The aldermen should be elected to make by-laws, to control the raising of revenue, and to make appropriations for the necessary public expenditure. But they should not be elected to grant paving contracts, to buy supplies, or to appoint men to the police force. An alderman is far better without such patronage, than with it. To any alderman it is a doubtful advantage to have the privilege of making appointments to the civic service. When he makes an appointment, he pleases one or two of his constituents and offends twenty or thirty.

If we are to have the commissioner system, we may as well have the full benefit of it. A divided control means a divided responsibility. If the public knew that it could hold the Health Commissioner responsible for any shortcomings in the health department, and if the Health Commissioner knew that his enjoyment of a good salary depended upon his convincing the public that his department was well-managed, we would have a healthier city than at present. At present the city is dirty, unsanitary, badly paved, insufficiently policed; and for all these faults the tax-payer blames a "corporation," a thing without soul or body.

It is being freely said that the Council will never consent to divest itself of any of its powers and privileges. It is worth remembering that the last word on the new charter has not to be said by the City Council. The failure of the present system is confessed. The aldermen acknowledge that thousands of dollars have been illegally spent, acknowledge that this rich city cannot afford the bare necessities of civic existence, acknowledge that all branches of the civic service are inadequate to their requirements, and have only each other to blame. In making these acknowledgments they practically concede the necessity for a radical change.

Ought it to be assumed that the City Council which has failed in all that it has undertaken to do is the only body competent to frame a charter for the future government of the city? The Council should make its recommendation, and it should be received

with the tax-payer and will the final real. The perity of comfort, that the legislat

In our as shown ports of accepted vantage judgment a table s cipal cou low. The authoriti tunity o who ext

Excess of Exports.

Excess of Imports.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF THE PRINCIPLE COUNTRIES IN 1896.

Exports.

Imports

Country.