

ESTABLISHED 1866.

THE MONETARY TIMES

AND TRADE REVIEW,

With which has been incorporated the INTERCOLONIAL JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, of Montreal, 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.
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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, DEC. 7, 1888

THE SITUATION.

Some uneasiness has been created among Canadian millers by a rumor that the Government contemplates putting an end to the privilege of grinding American wheat in bond. A deputation of millers waited on the Minister of Customs to protest against the change being made. The delegates assured the Minister that if they were not allowed to grind American wheat in bond, their mills would sometimes have to stand idle. The silence of the Minister of Customs as to whether the change would take place can scarcely have been satisfactory to the deputation. When the privilege mentioned was first granted, the millers were required to export a quantity of flour equivalent to the wheat imported; but on a complaint that the practice led to abuses, the regulation was altered, and they are now required to export the flour made from the wheat imported. If this condition be fairly carried out, the only effect of the privilege would be to give employment to our millers, or rather allow them to find it, by means of this facility, for themselves. In former times considerable sacrifice was made by the British exchequer to attract business to Canadian flour mills. At this time there was a duty on foreign flour entering the English market, while Canadian was free. To encourage Canadian milling, the law was so altered that American wheat ground in Canadian mills was allowed to enter the British market as Canadian. Unless it can be shown that there are abuses connected with the present practice of grinding in bond, the abolition of the privilege would be an unreasonable restriction upon the milling industry of the country.

Sir Donald Smith is assisting in promoting the proposed cable between Vancouver and Australia, in London. Recently there was a good representation of city merchants and others at the Cannon street hotel, when a resolution in favor of Government aid to the scheme was carried. The Pacific Telegraph Company asks a bonus of £75,000 a year from the Governments interested. The rate charged between Australia and England by Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, 9s. 8d. a word, is complained of

as excessive; but though this may be true, it does not follow that the Government ought to bear any portion of it. If it were to do so, the effect would be to compel people who do not use the cable to pay part of the tolls of those who do. The alleged necessity of an alternative line is another matter. The existing cable is liable to get out of order, and in case of war might be useless; a cable connected with a land telegraph wholly on British territory has something in its favor, from a national point of view. Unless the Governments give heavy subsidies to the Pacific cable, it is not likely to be laid. The ocean survey for the line is being carried on, and in one place the extraordinary depth of five miles has been found; but this, it seems, is far out of the direct line, where a more favorable depth might be hoped for.

The demand from Queensland that the colony be allowed a voice in the appointment of its governors, quite inexplicable at this distance, has had some light thrown upon it by the *Times*, which expresses the belief that the colony is anxious to secede from the empire. As a pretext for a cause of quarrel the demand is a poor one, being on the face of it unreasonable. The ship "Hopeful," belonging to the colony, was condemned for conspiracy and slave-dealing, having obtained a number of South Sea Islanders, on a promise that they would get stipulated wages for working on plantations, and then sold them into bondage. It seems that the refusal of the Crown to pardon the miscreants who did this shameful trick has been the material out of which to manufacture a grievance. If looks as if a governor was wanted who would listen to this demand for pardon. If this be the case, the Queenslanders will, we should hope, get no sympathy from any other colony; assuredly they can reckon on none from Canada.

One of the amendments accepted by the British Government to the Ashbourne Extension Land Purchase Act forbids the land commissioners to advance any money to a tenant for purchase till it has been made clear that his conversion from tenant to owner was not being made under pressure. The amendment was proposed by a Parnellite member, and it is a very necessary one. Hints were thrown out by Parnell himself that some of the purchasers might refuse to pay up on the ground that they had bought under coercion. A suggestion of this kind, falling on suitable soil, tends to realize itself. A peasant proprietary, even on a limited scale, would tend greatly to tranquilize Ireland, and it would give the new proprietors a stimulus to exertion that nothing else could. While this great practical reform is going on, Henry George continues his socialistic propaganda against individual proprietorship of land; but in doing so he is but talking to the winds.

When a number of Mormons asked liberty to take up their abode in our North-West, they offered the assurance that they did not intend to practice polygamy. It is already doubtful whether this promise is being kept.

Mr. A. Maitland Stonehouse, who resigned his seat in the British Columbia legislature to join them, volunteers the statement that these Mormons have not abandoned and do not intend to abandon polygamy. In him polygamy finds an open defender. It would seem as if the Mormons, in our North-West, are likely to give the same trouble to the Government that they have given in the United States. In attacking their system of polygamy we shall have the advantage of dealing with comparatively small numbers, even if they disregard the stipulations into which they entered with the Government. We may safely predict that they will not be allowed to depart from the understanding that they were not to practice polygamy. Mr. Stonehouse attempts in vain to force an analogy between these Mormons and the Mahomedans in British India, and to found upon it a right to break their engagement with our Government. England found the Mahomedans in India; Canada would not have permitted these Mormons to settle in the North-West, if they had not stipulated to observe monogamy, in their domestic relations.

It is a good sign to see workingmen, both in Montreal and Toronto, turning their attention to acquiring homes for themselves. In Montreal there is a scheme for obtaining land, outside the city, on which to erect five or six hundred artisans' dwellings. How far Government aid, which is said to have been sought, can be applied in furtherance of this object, is a problem with which we do not now deal; but the object itself is one to which it is impossible not to wish success. In Toronto, there is some talk of establishing an Artizans' Building Society, on the old plan, with a similar object. It is gratifying to see a tendency, in the artisans, to secure, by whatever legitimate means, homes for themselves; and it is scarcely more desirable for themselves than from a public point of view, at a time when the socialists are trying to delude them with a visionary scheme for getting rich by confiscating other people's property; a scheme which the other people, who are a large majority, are not going to allow the intending robbers to carry out.

A Washington telegram states that "an effort will be made at the coming session of Congress to take from the Canadian railways the advantages they now enjoy, as the result of the Interstate Commerce law." Then follow some highly imaginative figures of the profits which these railways are alleged to have made through these means. It is not impossible that some effort should be made to bring the business done by Canadian railways, partly on American and partly on Canadian territory, practically under the Interstate law. Nor do we suppose that such an achievement would in substance be impossible. A congressional committee on the relations with Canada is likely to proceed with its enquiries, and the railway question is sure to come under review. American railway companies are powerful in Congress, and they will not permit Canadian railways to enjoy an advantage over them, if they can help it. But if our railways have an advantage of