

the blessing of having men earn such wages, in this occupation. We have no special advantage in Canada for carrying on this industry which the United States does not possess, and we could not hope to do better than it does for the workmen in whose name Mr. Bartlet speaks. The iron men, Mr. Bartlet added, ask protection in proportion to the amount of labor expended; but the iron workers in the States are no better paid than common laborers, and any appeal made in their name in Canada, would seem to be out of place.

M. Mercier proposes to raise the timber dues; and in answer to deputations endeavoring to dissuade him from his purpose, he points to the necessities of the revenue. These necessities are great, but the policy on which he proposes to act may seriously affect the timber trade. The timber trade of New Brunswick, where the stumpage tax is relatively very high, has of late suffered a serious decline. With this disastrous example before him, M. Mercier might well pause before giving effect to the proposed increase. An industry may easily be destroyed by being over-weighted. It is impossible to look at the proposed experiment without serious apprehension. If the bill should compel lumberers to confine their operations to small areas, as one spokesman of a deputation contended it will, the increase of revenue would be very slight, if there were any at all. This consideration, if he could be convinced of the fact, would probably make Mercier stay his hand; but it is plain that he is not convinced, believing that the bill will produce a much needed increase of revenue.

The Secretary of the New York Chamber of Commerce points out that 1886 was a year of unusual speculation; and the figures which he gives of stock transactions afford ample proof of the statement. Besides stocks of other things were objects of speculation in an unwonted degree. The wheat crop was sold three times over, the cotton crop five times, and the sales of coffee were double the importations. The December panic called a halt, none too soon; the secretary is thankful for a restful feeling and comparative repose. Western speculators do not know what will be the effect of the interstate commerce law, or what will be the rulings of the commissioners; and there is uncertainty as to "what cloud the Treasury surplus may cast over the finances of the country." He concludes that this will be an "off year;" meanwhile slow healthy thrift is the order of the day.

It seems to be beyond doubt that speculation in lots, within varying distances, outside the city of Toronto, is being overdone. Plans of these properties, with imaginary railway stations on them, are being thrust into everybody's hands. One merchant assures us that each of his clerks has got a copy of such a plan, and that they have formed a syndicate among themselves to buy suburban lots, to which the lithographer's art has lent attraction.

When trouble comes these outside properties are always the first to feel it, and if clerks on small salaries are generally going into speculation, there may come a time when they will be subject to a great strain and undue temptation. Persons on small salaries cannot afford to speculate in any such way.

THE FISHERIES AND COMMERCIAL UNION.

There is an obvious inconvenience in discussing these two questions at the same time. The putting forward of commercial union, in Canada, may disincline the Americans to seek a solution of the fisheries question in another form, and though the proposal for a joint commission comes from Mr. Bayard, he has not yet accepted the conditions by which Great Britain and Canada modify his proposal. The intersection of commercial union is, under the circumstances, inopportune, to say the least of it. Mr. Bayard may regard it as an offer, so far as it can be considered such, of better terms than he might otherwise have been willing to take. To hold out a prospect of commercial union, however remote, must tell against the success of the negotiations in which the Canadian, the British and the American governments are engaged. The two proposals are entirely distinct and even mutually destructive, so wide is the difference between limited reciprocity and a customs' union.

The official proposal, originating with Mr. Bayard, and modified by Lord Salisbury, embodies a joint commission, to work on certain lines, to which, in their present shape, the assent of the American government is wanting. What the commission would have to consider would be the three first articles of the Adams-Clarendon draft of protocol, first presented in 1866, and then rejected. To some of the proposals contained in this draft, the Canadian government makes strong objections. It objects to allow American fishing vessels to ply their trade in all bays of which the mouths are not more than ten miles wide; to granting trading privileges to American fishing vessels; to supersede by a mixed tribunal of sea captains the Canadian courts, in the trial of fishery cases. By the terms of Lord Salisbury's despatch, discussion of the bait question seems to be precluded, as well as the proposals to allow commercial privileges to American fishing vessels, and to release all American vessels now under seizure, to refund fines and forfeitures, and to admit that Americans are entitled to damages in consequence of seizures and detentions and alleged violations by Canada of the Treaty of 1818. Lord Salisbury's despatch omits the articles of the protocol containing these several questions, from the list of those which the commission might discuss.

Were negotiation to proceed on these lines, American fishing vessels entering Canadian bays and harbors would, in the terms of Lord Salisbury's despatch, be admitted to our shore fisheries, during the coming season, and if necessary for a farther term, without pecuniary indemnity.

The Adams' draft of protocol contains points not sanctioned by the treaty of 1818. The mode in which it proposes to treat the headlands' question is an instance, and the new tribunal it would create for the trial of fishery cases is another. The claim that American fishing vessels should be accorded commercial privileges was first made in the Adams' draft of protocol; now, though that draft was not accepted, the claim is put forward in the form of a right, of which the sanction was antecedent to the rejected protocol. In this way aggression grows; new claims are first made, and afterwards are asserted as rights, though they rest on nothing more valid than the desires of the party putting them forward.

When Mr. Wiman stated with unquestioning confidence that the United States was ready to embrace Canada in a customs' union, it was impossible not to feel that even this side of his case was not free from doubt. Now the first state legislature, that of Pennsylvania, which has been asked to sanction a customs' union, has refused to do so. And the *New York Sun* tells us that we can get no customs' union unless we throw in our lot politically with the Republic. And if this side of the case of customs' union is not free from doubt, that of Canada presents still greater difficulties. We must not be misled by the consent of a limited number of farmers' representatives, got together at short notice, for the purpose. The manufacturers are as strongly on the other side; so is the government, while the other great political party is silent.

Let us not delude ourselves. England might possibly consent to commercial union; but if we discriminate against her commerce, we should have no right to count for one hour upon her protection. That she has renounced her duty of aiding in our defence is an allegation of which we see no proof. We cannot continue to enjoy a guarantee of imperial protection, if we refuse to accord the mother country the treatment of the most-favored nation; if, in our commercial dealings, we prefer a foreign country to her. Once more, we say, let us not delude ourselves; this question of commercial union inevitably involves our political destiny; and whether we accept the change of political allegiance or not, it is proper that we should, in a matter of such paramount importance, understand the full import of the proposed commercial union. For our part, we prefer to meet the political issue directly. The argument from propinquity or geographical position, to be of any avail, must include acceptance and justification of a change of political relations; because commercial union with the United States would put an end to our present relations with England.

A customs' union with the United States, if the two countries remained politically separate, would give rise to endless disputes over the division of the revenue. Prior to the legislative union, Upper Canada had experience of pooling her customs' revenue with that of another province; and the country was kept in constant turmoil over the division of the spoils. We were then dealing with an equal; in the new customs' union, we