

bring the matter to the notice of the government and press, in the strongest possible manner the justice of our demand in this respect.

Your committee learn that a treaty has lately been made between the United States and Spain, whereby the flag of the United States is placed on the same terms regarding customs duties as that of the latter country. The conditions of this treaty does not apply to British shipping, and we are consequently placed at a great disadvantage in Cuba and Porto Rico, to which the treaty more particularly applies, the difference in favor of the American flag so far as we can learn being equal to an average of about 20 per cent. on the whole tariff. On our fish, which is our chief export to these islands, it amounts to considerable more. By calculations made on data received, it would appear Porto Rico, fish by British flag pays about 12c. per quintal more than fish by American vessels; and that the tonnage duty for landing and loading cargoes is one hundred per cent., or just double on our vessels to what is exacted from the Americans. In Cuba the deferential duty in favor of the Americans is still larger, amounting to about 27c. per quintal; Cuba and Porto Rico are among our best customers, shipments to the latter having some years reached nearly 150,000 quintals, while to Cuba the demand is steady and increasing. It will therefore be seen that if the Americans continue to enjoy those great advantages, and we excluded, that it will be a heavy blow to our trade, and calls for prompt and energetic remonstrance from our government. The charges made by the Spanish Government through the consulates of 10 cents per ton on securing Spanish clearances is also very burdensome, and has been objected to by the United States, who claim that no foreign government has a right to impose such a charge, which is equal to an import tax on the product of their country. We have reason to believe that this unfair tax will be abolished in the United States, and our government should take immediate steps to place us in the same position.

Your committee desire to call the attention of the chamber to the necessity of a law being passed by the Dominion Legislature to secure the equitable distribution of the assets of insolvents. At present an insolvent can prefer a few of his creditors, and leave out all others, as is done in Nova Scotia frequently. This is a very great hardship, and if it is not possible to pass a bankrupt law this session, the legislature might pass a short act such as there is in Ohio, making all preferential assignments and all preferences given in contemplation of bankruptcy null and void.

Your Committee regret to report it has been stated to them by the coal owners of Pictou that there is a great falling off in the shipments of coal from Pictou over the Intercolonial Railway, more especially as regards the supplying of steamers calling at this port for bunker coal, which has been attributed to several causes, chief of which have been the prices charged and the want of facilities to get coal at any price at certain seasons. If the former had stood alone, it might possibly have been removed, but, as it took a subordinate position, it may be put on