

Derby would find it necessary to consult. Sir John could with truth reply that annexation, in the present state of opinion, is unpopular in Canada, and that a speedy change that would make the admission of Jamaica acceptable is improbable. A question of such serious import as this, if it must be decided, ought to be referred to the constituencies. But would it be possible to get a distinct answer to this one question, as a result of a general election? Annexation would be complicated with other questions, but the magnitude of the issues which it involves would place it in the foreground and possibly it might become, in the mind of the average elector, the question of questions. The other great issue before the country, the Tariff, has not been made as broad and distinct as it might have been, and, except the bread and coal duties, there would probably be a disposition to postpone its settlement for the purpose of bringing Jamaica annexation to the front and making it the most conspicuous object for the decision of the electors. The Minister would count the chances of success, and it is quite consistent with his antecedents to believe that, if he saw annexation would be a losing card before the constituencies, he would not hesitate to force it through the present Parliament by the aid of an assured party majority. The achievement would, in that case, probably cost him loss of office whenever the day of reckoning came. But then Sir John could look to England for his reward, and a new title might become his recompense for the loss of popularity and power in his own country. Who can say that, as things are now managed, all this is not liable to happen?

EIGHT hours to form a day's work is the claim of the Knights of Labour, whose organization covers Canada as well as the United States. In all occupations in which ten hours' labour can be sustained by the average workman without injury to health, a reduction to eight hours means a diminution of production of something like twenty per cent., and when less wages are earned it is inevitable that less should be paid. Besides, American industry must either confine its products to the home market or place itself in a condition to meet foreign competition. At present, only about two per cent. of United States manufactures is exported, and the reason why a larger proportion is not exported is that they cannot be sold on as good terms as the manufactures of other countries. In many countries the average day's labour is more than ten hours. If a German in the United States worked only eight hours a day, he could not hope to do as much in that time as a German in his native country could do in twelve. Other things being equal, the industrial greatness of the nation must be determined by the relative extent of the product of each labourer; it is, in fact, now largely determined in this way. The workman has in this question of what shall be a day's labour a common interest with the employer. Nations compete with one another, and that which slackens in the race must be content to be left behind. The proposed reduction of the hours of labour among artisans would have the same effect as if the farmers should come to an agreement to sow, in future, only four acres where they had hitherto sown five; the effect of which would be that where they had reaped sixty bushels before, they would in future reap only forty-eight. It is probable that, if the American and Canadian farmer were to do this, he would everywhere, except on new soils, find himself unable to grow wheat for exportation at all, under the existing conditions of competition. And the manufacturer, put under the threatened restraint of an eight hours' day, would, with even more certainty, meet the same doom. But the loss would fall exclusively on the worker, because it would be in the power of the employer to increase the number of his hands. The share which the worker can get for his labour must bear a direct relation to what he produces; and if all artisans were to produce less, their share would diminish in proportion to the slackening of their industry. The workman cannot enforce the reduction of the day to eight hours of labour without injuring himself in the proportion that he becomes less industrious.

THE experience of the *Neptune* in the Strait and Bay of Hudson, though it was probably exceptional, was not reassuring. The theory that there was no land north of Hudson's Bay high enough for icebergs to form upon is contradicted by the fact that icebergs were found in the Strait. That bergs were often found there had long been on record, though it was denied by some who assumed to speak with authority. The *Neptune* encountered ice to the end of August, which is probably later than it would in most years be found to offer obstruction, in the Strait of Hudson. From Nottingham Island ice was found to extend forty-five miles, and much of it was forty feet thick. Between Nottingham and Mansfield Island the vessel steamed through heavy fields of ice for nearly two days, laying up at night for fear of accident. Arctic ice comes down Fox Channel from as high as the seventieth degree of latitude, and it often greatly encumbers the Strait in passing out. The *Neptune* received some injury from the ice and

at Cape Diggs intelligence was received from the Esquimaux of a schooner having been nipped in the ice there a few days before. Four ice-bound vessels were observed, one of them a belated Hudson's Bay Company's craft. Fogs were met both in the Bay and Strait. The Strait is by no means free from sunken rocks. The presence in the Atlantic of unusual numbers of icebergs at a late date shows that there is something exceptional in the season; but, as these icebergs nearly all come from Baffin's Bay through Davis Strait, their presence in the neighbourhood of Newfoundland would not justify any conclusion about the normal state of Hudson's Strait in the month of August. The circumstance that a large number of icebergs were detached above Davis Strait this year does not create a presumption that the same thing would occur in Fox Channel. If we cannot form a favourable opinion from the experience of the *Neptune*, we are perhaps not yet justified in drawing any general conclusion at all. But the fact must be acknowledged that there are years in which, during the best months of summer, this navigation is so difficult as to have little or no certain commercial value. The observations which will be made by the men who have been posted at different stations, where the movement of the ice into and through the Strait of Hudson can be seen, will give us more certain information than is at present available. The record of these observations will be looked forward to with great anxiety. But important as it would be to a vast extent of country to find Hudson's Bay and Strait practically navigable for commercial purposes, it will be best not to court disappointment by indulging expectations which are not likely to be realized.

THE barbarities said to be practised in the lunatic asylums of Longe Point and Beauport, Quebec, would be incredible if their existence were not affirmed on authority to which no suspicion can attach. Dr. Tuke, an English expert on insanity, who came with the British Association to Montreal, has come forward as a volunteer witness of what he saw in these institutions. The strait-waistcoat was used in a ward set apart for quiet patients; men were fastened to chairs by straps; handcuffs were freely used; naked men were found crouching on beds of straw, and kept under restraint by handcuffs and belts, and the condition of a large number of women was still worse. Many of the rooms are low and ill-lighted; the available space is over-crowded, and unnecessary restraint and cruelty are practised. Dr. Tuke's revelations will explain, what was before known, that the proportion of cures in these asylums is much less than in the asylums of Ontario, and the mortality much greater. Apologists for the Quebec asylums had given the public assurance that these institutions had, in a long course of years, accumulated a large number of incurable patients who reduced the proportion of cures to admissions, and whose enfeebled bodies accounted for the disproportionate rate of mortality. In the absence of the statements now made public, the excuse was lame, for some of the Ontario asylums are old enough to have reached the possible average of incurable patients. In these two Quebec asylums some three thousand patients are confined; and one building into which a thousand are crowded could only afford suitable accommodation for six hundred. The attendants are less than half the necessary number. Dr. Tuke seems to be of opinion that the abuses which he has exposed flow from the semi-private character of these institutions, and he urges the Government to assume their management. When Dr. Douglas owned the Beauport asylum, before it came into the possession of its present owners, a violent and sustained attack was made upon the management by the *Journal de Quebec*, and it was deemed a suspicious circumstance that M. Cauchon, by whom the attack had been directed, became one of the purchasers, when Dr. Douglas was frightened into selling the establishment at a figure which was deemed greatly below its value. If there were reason for that crusade, in which much exaggeration was probably employed, there could be none for the degeneracy which has evidently taken place under the new management. Into the charges made by Dr. Tuke the Quebec Government cannot avoid making enquiry, and it is necessary that the investigation be searching and thorough. Sometimes the machinery of an official enquiry is made use of to cover up, not to expose, the real facts. These dens of horror are under the charge of the nuns, and it will be interesting to see whether the Church will make an effort to prevent the whole truth from being officially made known.

MICHIPICOTON would be famous if it could. Once the scene of a little Indian war which arose out of the Robinson treaty, it now seeks the celebrity which belongs to whiskey riots. Under the Public Works' Act the sale of whiskey is prohibited in the neighbourhood of the Canadian Pacific Railway works, and whiskey peddlers have appeared on the scene at Michipicoton to minister to the forbidden craving. A dozen Toronto