

## "HEAVY DAMAGES."

We received, too late for reference in last week's issue, a communication from Mr. A. D. Cameron, of Hamilton, solicitor for the plaintiff in the suit of *McRae vs Turner*, commented upon, under the above heading, in our issue of the 10th ult. Mr. Cameron to think that in the article in question, we have unduly reflected upon his client and placed him in a false light before the public. It seems to us that we have not reflected upon Mr. McRae at all. We stated the facts as accurately as we were able to ascertain them, and intended our article to be, and still believe it to be, only a fair comment upon the case, and fairly used as an introduction to the broader subject which, in the public interest, we discussed. Our correspondent does not point out any respect in which our statements are inaccurate, alleging that he does not feel at liberty to do so until the case is finally disposed of. Under these circumstances we are (perhaps necessarily) left in the dark as to whether the facts require any correction.

Certainly Mr. McRae is entitled to the presumption in his favor that arises from his having been acquitted of the criminal charge laid against him, and from an impartial jury having afterwards awarded large damages in his favor. These facts would appear to indicate that Mr. McRae is a much injured man. That the present result is not, however, necessarily final, his own solicitor admits. What we are concerned about is the general question discussed in the former article. Nothing could be farther from our intention than a desire to reflect unduly upon either party to the suit, or to affect in the slightest, even if that were possible, the rights of the parties before the court. The result of this particular case, important as it may be to the persons concerned, is, after all, a matter of trifling moment to the public which we serve. In this view it is only important as it throws light upon the broader question of the need for reformation of our law as affecting alleged fraudulent representations and acts, in connection with commercial transactions.

—Canadian trade with the Argentine Republic—which includes that part of South America east of Chili, extending from Bolivia and the Brazils to Cape Horn—is growing. Exports have been made thither this year from Quebec of lumber, wool goods, rope, canned meats and vegetables, to the value of nearly two million dollars. No less than twelve and a quarter million feet of lumber has been shipped by two firms from that port. A quantity of this lumber shipped is on Government account, and will be used in the construction of public buildings in La Plata, the new capital of the Province of Buenos Ayres. The lumber shipped by a single lumber company of Montreal for different firms, largely to Monte Video, amounted, we are informed, to something over twenty-one million feet.

According to the Consul at Quebec, the value of goods annually exported to the Argentine Republic from New York, exceeds four millions of dollars. These goods include, he says, many goods made in

Canada, such as agricultural implements, edge tools, machinery of all kinds, hardware, fencing, nails, tacks, boots and shoes, prints, twillings, shirtings, preserves of vegetables and fruits, canned goods, and numerous other articles. Mr. Maguire thinks Canada might participate more fully in this trade, and kindly offers to assist any manufacturers in the favorable introduction of Canadian products and the fostering of trade between the two countries.

## FRENCH FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

The receipts of the Republic of France for September were five millions of francs (\$100,000,000), below the estimate and the amount of the deficit feared for the year is sixty million francs, (\$5,000,000). Under these not very pleasing circumstances it may well be apprehended that France is drifting towards financial trouble. The estimates for 1885 presented by M. Tirard in April last, have since undergone great changes, both from circumstances and from the hands of the Committee. That body has cut down the expenditure by about 50 million francs, but in consequence of the falling off in the receipts of the railway companies, the sum required under the State guarantee of interest will be 28 millions, instead of 6 millions as was supposed. The savings effected by the Committee are thus only 28 millions.

A return is proposed to the old system of estimating the receipts at those realized in the last complete year, which is 1883, instead of counting on a progressive increase. This latter method was adopted a few years back by M. Leon Say, to avoid the encouragement to extravagance by the apparent large surpluses; but since the change the elasticity of the revenue has ceased, and instead of an increase there has been a series of deficits. "In the first nine months of the present year," says the correspondent of the *London Economist*, "the indirect taxes produced 47,620,000f less than the estimates, and 13,569,000 less than in 1883. The receipts will therefore be reduced 86 millions, which, after deducting the 28 millions saved in the expenditure, will leave 58 millions to be provided. No decision has yet been come to as to the means to be employed to obtain that sum, but three courses have been proposed: by new or increased taxes; by further reduction of expenses; or by a partial suspension of the redemption of Treasury bonds, for which a credit of 100 millions is open in the Budget."

The Government is meditating a conversion of 37 millions of old 4½ per cent. Rentes (not the new 4½) into 3 per cents., and thus saving five million francs per annum. Last year the 4½ per cents. were converted into four per cents., and as French credit stood higher then than now, it would have been easier to make the reduction to three per cents, but this may not now be impossible.

Various causes have brought about the state of the revenue above described: Large outlay for the Chinese War, the heavy and unexpected guarantees of railway interest, above described, also a congested condition of trade and manufacture oppressed by taxes and restrictions.

The committee on the Budget recommended some sweeping reductions in the estimates for both Army and Navy, but these are opposed by the ministers of those departments, who seem to think more of the national warlike "glory" than of making ends meet. The leading branches of domestic industry are suffering from almost unprecedentedly prolonged stagnation—"This is the consequence," says *L'Economiste Francaise*, "of the detestable financial and economic policy which we have been following for years, and of which the great public are now becoming aware." At Lyons, the crisis in the metallurgical and silk industries

is assuming dangerous proportions, and nothing less than "communal workshops," a plagiarism of "national workshops," is now talked of. In Paris, all industries would seem to be suffering indiscriminately. In the Departments the complaints and anxieties of agriculturists are not less adverse to the trade of the provincial boroughs and small towns. The masses are constrained to practice unusual economy, which means diminished trade for the shopkeepers and the whole range of salable products. In criticizing the Government for not pressing commercial treaties with more vigor, and thus affording some relief by founding markets abroad for surplus manufactures, *L'Economiste* says:—

"It is high time to think of economic and fiscal reforms, for the uneasiness is general, and local crises may develop. It may be admitted that France is not the only country which is suffering in consequence of the economic situation. But the evil is more severe in France, and is due to permanent causes, the operation of which must continue to intensify. Negotiations have been begun with Turkey for the admission of French products to the advantages of the new import tariff. Nothing is yet known of the Franco-Dutch treaty of commerce, the ratification of which is impatiently awaited by the traders of both countries. The quarantine has been raised in Italy, but Spain still maintains it on her frontiers, although several towns in the interior have already been invaded by the cholera. All this increases the embarrassments and disappointments of French trade."

We observe that, as reported in the *London Economist* of October 11th:

In the report of the Valuation Committee at the Ministry of Commerce, for fixing the prices of commodities in 1883, as a basis for the Customs returns, M. Natalis-Rondot, chairman of the section of textiles, refutes the argument put forward by Protectionists for the purpose of discrediting the treaties of commerce, that the quantity of French exports of that class were decreasing. The exports of tissues between 1866 and 1869 averaged 841 millions of francs, while from 1879 to 1882 the amount was only 716 millions. But the 841 millions in the former period represented only 30,000 tons of merchandise, while the 716 millions in the latter period was the value of 43,000 tons. With the smaller money value the increase in quantity was 40 per cent. The steady progression in the exports of textile manufactures is confirmed by the consumption of foreign raw material, the average annual imports having increased from 243,000 tons in the period 1866-9, to 345,000 tons in that from 1879 to 1882, although the value fell from 748 millions of francs to 666 millions. Between those two periods the initial prices of silk goods fell 26 per cent.; linen, 11 per cent.; merinos, and woollens, 27 per cent.; cloths, 14 per cent., and calicos 50 per cent. The exportations, nevertheless, did not keep pace with the production, and he concludes that the French organization for the sale of goods abroad is not so much advanced as that for manufacturing.

The following is the return of the Paris Bankers' Clearing house for September, with months for comparison:—

	francs.
September, 1884.....	326,425,275
August, 1884.....	340,666,844
September, 1883.....	336,305,209

## THE GRAND TRUNK.

Sir Henry Tyler estimates that the Grand Trunk Company lost, last year, through the short harvest £50,000, and by low competition rates £60,000. At the same time a great check was kept over the controllable expenditure and no less than £147,000 was saved by reductions in working expenses. In the rent received for rolling stock there was, in the half year, an increase from £17,000 to £19,000, about the