

parties will have to take the burthen directly upon their own shoulders. What-ever may be thought of the local improvement system in vogue here, now that it has had a trial, we venture to say that no one foresaw the extent of the drain on the civic treasury which it has occasioned. We must retrace our steps before it is too late.

#### A BIT OF HISTORY IN FUR SEALING.

If Mr. Blaine intends to agree with Great Britain to refer the Behring Sea question to arbitration, as he probably does, it would have been sufficient for him to say so without circumlocution, and under the reference he could have gone into the whole history of the dispute as well as the present rights of third nations in presence of those of Russia and the United States. The owners of the "Pearl," of Boston, which was turned away from Sitka by the Governor of Russian America in 1822, were afterwards indemnified by Russia. And, if the facts be brought out, the part played by the United States in the seal and sea otter fur trade, on the northern coast of America, will probably be found to contain many incidents equally interesting. One of the first uses which the Americans made of their independence was to fit out vessels for the North-West coast; and in the second year of this century, of the sixteen ships known to have been on the North-West coast, fifteen were American and one English. The fur of the sea otter, which differs a little from seal, was then the favorite, the principal market for it being China. In 1801, more than 18,000 sea otter and other furs were collected by American vessels alone for this market. The trade afterwards declined, owing to the great destruction of the animals, of which improvident action Russia had been the first to set the example, on the shores of Kamschatka and the Aleutian islands. Young, old and female were all indiscriminately slaughtered. All the facts connected with these fur-bearing animals, from the first discovery of the Aleutian islands by Russia to the present day, show the necessity of some measures being taken for their preservation. The extent of the recent destruction of the seals has apparently been exaggerated: similar complaints have at all times been made since this region was visited by Russian, American and English vessels, in search of furs.

#### THE MCKINLEY TARIFF.

The question whether the tariff law is constitutional is to be tested in the United States courts by a responsible Chicago house. The preliminary petition filed in the U. S. Circuit Court of that city declares the new tariff law to be unconstitutional, void and of no force or effect. This assertion is based on the claim that the bill was passed contrary to the law governing the passage of acts, which declares that three things must be done in order to make a law. These are that the proposed enactment shall be accepted by the House, then by the Senate and signed by the President. It is alleged [this was not done with the

McKinley Bill, and the Board of Appraisers concedes the point.

Commenting on the coming test suit to settle the matter of validity, the *Shipping List* presumes that although it is not stated in the petition, the defence will argue that the House was without a quorum when finally disposing of the measure. There has been considerable talk about contesting the right of collectors to enforce the provisions of the new law, but this is the first practical step in that direction. As the machinery of the courts move slowly, we may expect a final decision some years hence.

#### NOVA SCOTIA COAL TRADE.

It is gratifying to find that the condition of the coal industry of Nova Scotia during 1890 was generally satisfactory, and that the aggregate output for that year shows a marked increase over several previous years. Indeed the expression of the coal miners' organ, the *Trades Journal*, is that the business done last year is the best in the history of the trade. Shipments to the United States, already considerable, promised to be very large, but severe weather setting in before the usual time for stopping shipment, reduced the export. From the tabulation made by that journal, which we copy below, it appears that there has been an increase of 196,824 tons in the output of coal as compared with 1889:—

CUMBERLAND COUNTY.		
Mine.	1889.	1890.
Spring Hill .....	366,860	376,550
Joggins .....	37,935	53,482
Chignecto .....	13,650	7,485
Sundries .....	1,300	1,500
PICTOU COUNTY.		
Drummond .....	119,873	120,000
Acadia .....	101,018	106,097
Albion .....	52,668	67,434
Vale .....	76,146	68,586
Black Diamond .....	32,390	32,301
Muir's .....	1,125	1,360
CAPE BRETON COUNTY.		
Bridgeport .....	24,000	25,000
Caledonia .....	103,000	145,000
Glace Bay .....	74,000	109,000
Gowrie .....	100,000	125,000
International .....	118,000	135,000
Ontario .....	3,000	9,000
Reserve .....	110,000	139,000
Sydney .....	124,000	150,000
Victoria .....	91,000	75,000
Sundries .....	3,000	3,000
RECAPITULATION.		
County.	1889.	1890.
Cumberland .....	419,745	439,011
Pictou .....	383,220	395,778
Cape Breton .....	750,000	915,000
Totals .....	1,562,965	1,749,789

The total coal raised in 1890 was thus 1,749,789 tons, as compared with 1,562,965 tons in the preceding year. In sixteen mines out of twenty the output was increased, the exceptions being, in Pictou, the Vale and the Black Diamond collieries, in Cumberland the Chignecto colliery, and in Cape Breton the Victoria. But these decreases [all] told reached only 30,000 tons, while there was 227,000 tons raised by the other collieries in excess of the previous year.

As to the quantity exported, we shall know more when the Trade and Navigation return comes out. Meanwhile the *Journal* estimates [that] [there has been shipped to the United States 50,000 tons, an increase

of 20,000. We quote further: "At the Joggins mines work during the year was fairly active. Of round there was shipped 48,951, and of slack 4,531 tons; total of 53,482. Upwards of 7,000 were sold and used at the works, making the output 60,901. Many improvements have lately been effected, chiefly in the system of working the coal. It is expected that the present year will show an output of 100,000 tons.

"For less than ten months work the showing of the Spring Hill collieries is excellent. During the year there were shipped 376,590 gross tons against 368,860 for the whole of 1889. At Drummond colliery, Pictou, work was brisk during the year. The shipments show no increase, as the shipments in 1889 were exceptionally large. Many improvements have been effected, and are in contemplation, and the outlook for a brisk trade this year is good. There has been a marked increase in the shipments from the Albion collieries. The totals for 1890 are 67,434 against 52,668 for 1889. The outlook for 1891 is good. It is expected that in a few months the output from the Foord pit will be several hundred tons daily. This, added to that of the McGregor pit and the Slopes, should place it in the front rank as a producer. Less work was done at the Vale, owing to the McBean slope being on fire. The quantity shipped was 68,586, a decrease of 7,560 tons. Work at Black Diamond was fair. The output for 1890 is 89 tons less than in 1889—rather a coincidence."

#### EXPORT CATTLE TRADE.

The sitting in Montreal of the Commission for enquiry into the live cattle export trade was concluded on Saturday last, and the Deputy Minister of Marine has opened a similar enquiry at Quebec, which city, the president of the Board of Trade argues, possesses "superior facilities and advantages for the shipment of cattle over any other port in the Dominion, without any exception." Much of the evidence taken there on the first day was, although valuable, irrelevant, and some of it *ex parte* as against Montreal and in favor of Quebec as a shipping point.

It appears to be the opinion of the Commissioner, and of most other people who are acquainted with the subject, that there is not sufficient ground for the suppression of the export trade in live cattle. But there is quite evidence enough that it requires regulation, and that animals shipped from Canadian ports have occasionally undergone cruel suffering. In good weather and during certain months of the year, cargoes of cattle, placed in stalls of adequate strength, having sufficient space, being attended by competent men, and given ample food and water, have been taken across the Atlantic from Montreal and every head landed safe and well. In the earlier days of the trade such trips were made by prominent exporters who themselves looked to the details and fed and watered the cattle on the ship (paying £7 per head freight), with the result stated. But of late years the pressure to cheapen freight on the one hand and to crowd cattle