

intentions; but the task is an impossible one. Better indeed, would be the leasing of the road to some one of the three private railway corporations for a term of years, with a certain control of rates and a certain rate of return on the present investment. A private company would soon turn the politically-appointed employees out and give those who have been appointed on their merits a chance to show themselves equal to the officials of competing railways. One has but to walk into the stations at St. John to see how different is the attitude of Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railway individuals. Government ownership is excellent in principle but, in Canada at least, unfortunate in practice.



RECENT investigations seem to prove that a certain percentage of disease and unhealthiness is caused by the consumption of unsound meat. All Canadian meat exported must be inspected and stamped by government inspectors, but meat which is sold locally is not inspected. A purveyor of meat who has material which he thinks will not pass the strict export inspection is likely to turn it in for local consumption. Such a course would be perfectly natural.

Discussing this subject in the *Canadian Farm*, Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Veterinary Director-General, states that he believes the most important step for the local authorities is to provide public municipal abattoirs, to be conducted under inspection methods similar to those required by the Dominion Act. He condemns the private slaughter house absolutely as being usually filthy and unsanitary. He also states his belief that local Boards of Health have been sadly remiss in their duties in the matter of inspection of slaughter houses and retail food shops.

This is a subject which should be seriously considered by all citizens who take an interest in the general welfare of the community. If Dominion inspection is important to see that export meat is pure, surely provincial inspection to ensure purity in local food supplies is equally important.

POLAR PERPLEXITIES

THE early days of the autumn of 1909 will be memorable for the world-astounding news that the North Pole has shown itself to the gaze of the victorious explorer and has gracefully submitted to become an advertising medium for the Stars and Stripes. Dr. Frederick A. Cook had burst upon us with the announcement of his triumph in April, 1908, and our breath was just beginning to return to us when Commander Peary's voice was heard from the northern wilds, declaring that April, 1909, was his lucky month, that he also is a Polar Star. All the evening papers blossom in furs and Eskimos and each morning brings travellers' affidavits to the breakfast table. Dr. Cook's story is being inspected as if it were the product of a Chicago meat-cannery, and the world waits to hear more about the adventures of these two sons of Columbia, while Lieutenant Shackleton's dash to the South looks like a little faded flower.

One is almost afraid to venture any remarks on the subject, especially since Dr. Cook has been wined and dined by the King of Denmark himself and has said so emphatically that he was first at the top o' the world. The original Cook narrative was by no means in the language of the scientific explorer and read as if it were an up-to-date product of ochre journalism. The story about the gasoline and the gum drops proved too much for the humorists who write a daily column of smiles, and the English papers in particular dropped into facetious comment at the expense of the confectionery. Also the temperature, 117 degrees below zero, seemed more than a trifle unpropitious to a gum-drop luncheon and highly favourable to freezing the genial current of Eskimo repartee. However, between now and Christmas there will be leisure to hear from both gentlemen who will doubtless go on the lecture platform and discourse for many dollars on "Poles I Have Flagged."

As British subjects, we may be thankful that the two discoverers belong to one and the same nation. Had Peary been an Englishman, there would have ensued national complications with Polar War as a certainty. As it is, the immediate prospect is Civil War when Captain Robert and Doctor Frederick reach their beloved Land of the Free. Our own Captain Bernier is away somewhere in the Arctic regions and we should not be at all surprised if he also would come back with a Polar Discovery in the hold of his brave ship. After all we have spent on the Bernier expedition, it is only fair to expect a few frozen seas by way of return. A Canadian has arisen in the House of Commons in Great Britain to demand that correspondence regarding the

North Pole ownership should be brought down. Yet it is likely that the Canadian citizen, for some years to come, will prefer Rosedale, Westmount or Vancouver lots to a country seat within five minutes walk of the North Pole.

AN INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY

OFFICIALISM at Ottawa is as dumb as an Egyptian mummy on the recent Preston controversy in Japan. Mr. W. T. R. Preston was sent to Japan two or three years ago for the purpose of developing trade between the Dominion and the Orient. Information that has been made public in England and Canada seems to point to friction between the Canadian representative and the officials of various western countries in the land of the Mikado. Mr. Preston's primary duty was to develop Canadian trade, and in his efforts in that direction he came into conflict with representatives of trade interests from other parts of the world, who thought they had enough to do without being brought into direct relations with the demands of energetic Canadians. These commercial representatives seemingly turned the Canadian Government representative down, and in course of time he was made painfully aware that as an official he was a nobody, holding no standing in commercial or official life.

It is notorious that nearly all foreigners in the East for some reason or other are anti-Japanese. As might have been expected Mr. Preston took the side of the weaker party and boldly declared himself pro-Japanese to the hilt, resulting, apparently, in social and official ostracism. Then, to make matters more unpleasant, the whole anti-Japanese English press of the East opened their batteries with the intention of making that land of seismic disturbances too hot for him. The immediate result was a newspaper war, and for more than twelve months no Eastern-English paper was published without either the pros or cons of "the Preston controversy." Mr. Preston's greatest offence in commercial and official life appears to have been the suggestion that Japanese and Canadians should enter into direct trade relations, without the products of either country going through the hands of commission agents or middle-men, who in the meantime exploit the foreign trade of Japan for their own personal advantage.

Private information says that Ambassador O'Brien has reported to the Foreign Office at Washington that strong grounds were taken by the British Ambassador, the German Minister and the United States Ambassador against Mr. Preston's Direct Trade policy. Cables from London also give currency to the rumour that the British Ambassador reported to the Colonial Office very much on the same lines. Between them they practically demanded that the policy pursued by Mr. Preston in Japan should be ended, for the simple reason that the carrying out of such a policy would create considerable disturbance in commercial circles and would result in severe losses to the foreign business community of Japan. There is nothing that officialism likes better than that existing conditions should not be disturbed, and fortunately or unfortunately, Mr. Preston does not seem to take that view. According to his critics he was ill-advised enough to consider that Canadian interests should have precedence over the *status quo*—for this he has been called down by the Ambassadors of Great Britain, United States and Germany. If the rumours in circulation can be regarded as authentic, a simple Canadian question revolving around Mr. Preston's actions has become one of international interest to the three great Powers of the world.

When Mr. Preston went to Japan some of his critics thought it was a good place for him, because amid a strange people and a still stranger language, little would be heard of him in Canada for some considerable time. These hopes have not been realised; it is very doubtful whether the last has been heard of him in connection with this subject yet. Apparently the Ottawa Government have taken a serious view about one of their officials being regarded in a foreign country as a nobody, as it is reported that they are insisting that representatives of Canada in foreign countries in future shall have their position and status duly certified to by the Colonial Office in London, and that they shall be no longer under the beck and call or subject to the official criticism of even distinguished British Ambassadors. The next session of Parliament will not be many days old before all the papers in connection with the Preston controversy in Japan will have to be presented to the House. Until then it will be as well to reserve comment, but present appearances indicate that Mr. Preston's action in Japan will have a very far-reaching influence in a declaration of independence on the subject of the status of Canada in foreign countries in the future. The question will have to be settled as the natural outcome of this controversy whether the personal interests of foreign commission agencies shall be considered of greater importance by British officialism than the general interests of the Dominion of Canada.

Of course no Government wants to put itself publicly in a position of quarrelling with officialism, and this probably explains the reticence of the Ottawa authorities on the subject, and Mr. Preston's failure to satisfy the public interest by withholding further information on the subject. Either high official influences in Great Britain, United States and Germany have actually been set at naught by Mr. Preston, or he has been sat upon by the official representatives of these countries in Japan. Probably when Parliament meets, we shall know more of this situation. At present, however, it looks as if Mr. Preston had won a victory for Canada, which may have far-reaching results.

REMUS.