

acquisitions in China, lets it be understood that she would not countenance in other nations a game of land-grabbing which would mean partition; her object being trade, she expects to continue to enjoy it, under the Chinese Government. All Europe now trades with China, at twenty-four treaty ports, on the same terms that England does; but the other European nations have not been able to make their competition for a share of the Chinese trade very effective. England continues to do the bulk of the European trade with China, to the great discontent of her European rivals. Mr. Sherman admits that England opened for the United States the trade of China; and the Republic has known how to use her opportunities, for she does as much business with the Flowery Kingdom as all the European nations, apart from England. This fact should be encouraging to Canada, which, from her position on the Pacific, has the same facilities of trading with China that the United States has. When France obtained an opening for her trade at the port of Nanking, forty years ago, England demanded and obtained the right to trade at the same port, on equal terms; and we may be sure that she will now make a similar demand in respect to the Chinese ports at which Germany and Russia have sought and obtained trading privileges.

Mr. Chamberlain, Secretary for the Colonies, has lost every particle of the hope which buoyed up Cobden when he confidently predicted that all nations would soon follow England in the beneficent path of free trade on which she had entered, "We must," says Mr. Chamberlain, "seek in our own family the strength and support which we shall never find from foreign nations; and with this view we must be ready to respond to any colonial overtures, without seeking pecuniary recompense, but looking to the wider interests of the future." This he said as a prelude to a proposal, which he announced, that Parliament, as a means of balancing the sugar bounties of other countries, should make a large grant in aid of the West Indies. The way the press has criticized this proposal shows that there is no abatement of the free trade faith in England. Mr. Chamberlain estimates at £2,000,000 the benefit which England annually reaps, in the form of cheap sugar, from the sugar bounties. It would be a mistake to conclude that what England gains the West Indies lose. The loss is shared by other sugar-cane growing countries. The competition with beet sugar makers would, perhaps, be unequal if left to unloaded competition. From whatever cause, there is much defective sugar cultivation, even in Cuba during peace, and the state of things in this particular is much worse in the British West Indies. It looks as if Mr. Chamberlain would find some difficulty in passing his proposed measure of relief through Parliament.

In Mr. Keating the city of Toronto loses a valuable engineer, gone into the employ of the Toronto Railway Company. Experts, when they are reliable, may safely be allowed a large latitude in doing work which only experts fully understand. Some aldermen may flatter themselves that they will now get a free hand in matters that require scientific knowledge. There is one thing unfortunate, which it is impossible not to regret in Mr. Keating's translation. He leaves the employ of the city when it has a lawsuit with the Toronto Railway Company, and goes to the other litigant, just at the time when he was relied on as an important witness. It will, however, be recalled that he is the third competent and valuable man whose services as city engineer have been lost to Toronto by the vagaries of aldermen. Mr. Shanly was the first to rebel against thralldom, then Mr. Jennings, now Mr. Keating.

UNITED STATES BANKING AND CURRENCY.

Secretary Gage's banking and currency scheme recently brought before Congress, has perished, still-born, as we foresaw it would the moment it was introduced. Mr. Gage, appearing before the House Committee on Banking, as a witness, explains the failure of his scheme. "The predisposition of the people," he says, "is in favor of Government notes," and "you cannot change their minds. They are timid and suspicious of bank note issues. They disbelieve that anyone can uphold a system such as I have sketched without selfish and sordid motives. They fear that it involves hazard and loss. They recall the period of wild-cat banks." He might have said that his own scheme recalled it in many particulars. The revival of the old Safety Fund feature of Van Buren's scheme, though that was in form an improvement on pre-existing methods, was sure to recall wild-cat banking, for under it in the State of New York millions of bogus capital figured in the stock lists of these banks. The present National Banking system of the United States has been slowly developed, bit by bit, to afford a succession of remedies against defects and possibilities of fraud, in previous systems. Whoever undertakes to remove the manifold precautions against loss to the public from banks, must be prepared to show that the country has cast off all the evil instincts against the consequences of which the wit of the Legislatures was taxed to the utmost. And if we look to railway and other monopolies, there is small encouragement to believe that any such moral improvement has taken place. Mr. Gage overstates the public suspicion; the people are not suspicious of National Bank notes which they know to be specifically secured; but they may, as he says, be suspicious of bank notes not so secured. That suspicion has its root in history; it was born of disaster to the public, and though, as always happens in like cases, it has probably survived the state of things which gave it justification; if it has not already, it is sure to outlive the reasons that justified it; and when this happens, the suspicion, just in its origin, can work only mischief, like a malevolent superstition.

LAKE GRAIN TRANSPORT.

Reference was made by the president of the Winnipeg Corn Exchange the other day to some matters connected with the handling and export of Manitoba and North-West grain that deserve consideration. Five or six times as much of the export hard wheat of Western Canada goes to the seaboard by way of Buffalo, N.Y., mostly in American steamers. Mr. Bawlf says, that of 12,928,000 bushels of the 1897 crop shipped for export, 11,000,000 bushels went by way of Buffalo, while 2,000,000 bushels found its way to the seaboard by way of Montreal. He further says that in 1897 there was shipped from Montreal about 10,000,000 bushels of wheat against 17,000,000 bushels from Fort William. This state of the grain carriage trade is not a pleasing subject of contemplation for Canadian carriers or for Canadians at large. But until we can get modern boats of our own to rival the 4,000-ton steel steamers that now carry ore and grain down and coal up the lakes, we shall probably have to grin and bear seeing our grain carried in American bottoms as far as lake navigation will carry it.

Mr. Bawlf drew attention to Fort William as a grain shipping port. Its importance in this connection, he points out, is not generally recognized. During the year 1895 there was shipped from Fort William, 10,587,866 bushels of wheat; during the next season, 12,689,000 bushels; during the season of 1897 the quantity increased to 17,600,-