

NORTH OF ENGLAND LETTER.

Sir William Sinclair is a Manchester leader who is by no means unknown in Ontario and Quebec. He is a stalwart of the Chamberlain persuasion, and he has been favoring the press with his reading of mid-Canadian opinion. In essence, he says that sentiment is not considered a sufficient bond of Empire. The growing cosmopolitanism of Canada and the reciprocal relations with the States make a material tie desirable. Of course our Free Traders retort that the precarious nature of the alliance would be merely aggravated by the introduction of more sordid considerations. It is competent to accept a little of each of these views, and to be immediately practical, it is possible to act on both. Those who feel the dangers to be acute might well take steps to keep the intellectual communications between the countries open. A sober league with its emotions well restrained and its flag-wagging proclivities tightly curbed, might do a fine work in keeping sympathy alive. It is the misfortune of Empire Leagues that they are liable to hysterics which remove them from intimacy with our phlegmatic people. Interchange of visits by such bodies as the C.M.A. and the Chambers of Commerce are very much to the good, but the ideal institution to help England in Canada and Canada in England should be free from any mercenary taint that may cling to the skirts of professedly mercantile bodies.

English butchers are not averse from the importation of Canadian cattle whatever our farmers may be. At the dinner of the York Butchers' Association, Mr. R. B. Lambert spoke the butchers' mind vigorously, insisting that our breeders must breed more or submit to importation from more countries. The dearness of store stock, he contended, was the principal difficulty of the English farmer, and while fresh blood was being denied, many of the best animals were shipped abroad from here leaving the unsound to propagate their defective kind. He claimed that Canada should be in no worse position legally than Ireland, and he concluded by saying that men of sound judgment estimated that five millions sterling had been lost to England in the last seven years by the exclusion of Canadian cattle. Enough has been quoted to prove the existence of two views of the question; the official view and another. But before the embargo is lifted some clever person will have to "square" Ireland. Is Canadian ingenuity equal to the occasion? What can be offered as a quid pro quo?

If Lancashire does not follow with acute interest the manoeuvres of the Dominion Cotton Combine, it is probably because of her present plethora of business. For a year it can hardly matter to Lancashire whether the Canadian market is closed against her goods or not. That business is lucrative as well as plentiful is indicated by the 5 per cent. advance in wages, which is to date from July, and the more shadowy 2½ per cent. advance that is to be confirmed or refused in January next. From advices from Montreal it is possible for the Lancashire man to believe that the tariff is not to go prohibitively against him after all. But he is actually much too busy to worry.

A curiosity of our local Government regulations is the allowance of varying periods for the repayment of loans. The same town for works of the same kind may be accorded 60 years to pay off one debt and only 30 years to pay off another. Such is the case with Swansea and its waterworks. The burden on the present generation is increased most seriously by the whittling down of time for repayment. In the Swansea case it means a difference to the present payers of rates of 1½ cents on the dollar annually, and the Town Council is rebelling against the dictum of the Local Government Board. This is explicable enough, albeit the longer the loan the more interest must eventually become payable on the principal.

A feature of the mineral production of Canada accounts very noticeable to the Englishman is the paucity of flagstone and granite quarried. Less than \$7,000 worth of the one and \$100,000 worth of the other, looks somewhat incredible. Perhaps these statistics are as fallible as our own bearing on the same subjects. Our officials take great care with the returns made to them, but it is not possible in practice to make quarry-owners and others give details with precision.

Apropos of flagstones, it is due to say that great developments in this country have taken place in the manufacture of artificial flags in concrete. Granite clippings form the substance of most makes and these are bound with cement in the proportion of one to three or more parts. Even clinker has been used as a base, though the presence of sulphur in the ashes is detrimental to the durability of the stone. Experience has proved that "tailings" from the South African gold mines can be used thus and at least one English maker uses iron slag. Messages show that in Canada some new steps are being taken in the manufacture of cement. This being so, it may be said that not all makers on this side use mechanical or hydraulic pressure in forming slabs. More are hand-moulded than pressed, and there is a general desire to produce flags that shall not be slippery to walk upon.

Since the turn of the quarter quite a number of flotations have come upon the stock market. The Shawinigan Falls and Montreal Light and Heat are two Canadian ventures launched here. Of their reception it is too soon to speak, but if the presence of available capital and the good odor of Canada in the market are considered, the subscriptions should be good. Many financial propositions are waiting to appear and later on it may be that funds will be shorter.

Pig iron is a fair index to the prosperity of our industries. Now it promises to move upwards and forge-masters are reasonably confident of a more profitable year than the bad one now closed. Mr. Hugh Bell prophesies the coming of a time when demand shall again exceed supply. Steel frame building construction is to play its part in affecting the change. Doubtless Canadians will consider us far behind themselves in this respect, for steel building is only in its infancy here.

"Our trade our politics," has, perhaps libellously, been called the motto of the liquor interest. But the tea-drinker has now no good cause to throw indiscriminate stones. A determined attack by the Anti-Tea Duty League has certainly had something to do with the recent remission of twopence per lb. conveyed by the Budget. An over-whelming flood of posters depicted the inequity of a level tax of eight pence per lb. on cheap tea and fine tea alike. These and tons of leaflets flung away at the by-elections have created a weight of adverse opinion now translated into action. Altogether the phenomenon is interesting in that it gives a lesson in the power of advertising over politics. No statesman made a burning question of the tea-tax. Those affected most prejudicially made their protest by advertisement—and the tax diminished.

Manchester, April 14th.

NORTH COUNTRY.

CANADIAN MUNICIPAL CONDITIONS.

The progress of urban concentration in Canada has, perhaps fortunately, hardly been sufficiently rapid to render the problem of municipal administration so acute as has been the experience of some other countries. It is true that during the last sixty years the proportion of total population of the Dominion, contained within towns and cities of over 5,000, has increased from 12 to 24 per cent., but this has been steady and uniform, and not characterized by large local concentration of foreign immigration, as has been the case largely in the United States. At the present time, ten Canadian cities of over 25,000 people, contain 16 per cent. of her total population, while five cities of over 50,000 contain only 10 per cent., though this is a blessing to the nation which past experience shows is likely, unfortunately to become less and less marked. As remarked by Mr. Munro: "The main political problem of the Canadian people is still that of national and provincial, rather than that of municipal government." Since the organization and control of local government is vested with the Provincial, and not with the Federal authorities, there is in the cities of the seven different provinces no exact conformity to any type of city political organization. In framing their general charter laws and in formulating special charters for particular cities, the Provincial authorities have been guided partly by English and partly by American experience. Variations