

we have intimated before, while we regard the self-constituted combine as inadmissible and dangerous, we are quite inclined to regard state-regulated combines as among the most probable solutions of the question. A Minister of Commerce or a permanent commercial commission might perhaps contrive to give the people the benefits of combination without its exactions and dangers.

THE amount of Dominion money that is now being spent or pledged for local works in the Maritime Provinces is startling. The policy of granting liberal bonuses in aid of provincial railways, if justifiable at all, can be justified only on two grounds. First, that the projects thus aided are of such a kind as to be of advantage to the whole country as well as to the localities particularly interested; and second, that the appropriation made will have the effect of stimulating, not superseding, local enterprise. But when such railroads are constructed wholly by the Dominion Government the evidence that they are of national benefit should surely be of the clearest character. How do these obvious principles apply to the three great Government works now provided for in the Maritime Provinces, viz., the Nova Scotia Short Line, and the New Brunswick Short Line Link, whose estimated cost is \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 respectively, and the Chignecto Ship Railway, to cost we forget how many millions? The first-named road will, it appears, effect a reduction of about ten miles in distance and will compete with the Intercolonial, another Government work. The Short Link from Harvey to Moncton will compete, we believe, with both the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific, and will save about seventeen miles in distance. Few of those who should be best informed seem to have any faith in the commercial value of the Chignecto Ship Railway. It is noteworthy that the Government made little attempt to defend either of the two roads first named, certainly not the latter, on its merits, from a Dominion point of view. Their construction as Government works, it is almost openly avowed, is undertaken simply in fulfilment of ante-election pledges. Were these works of such a character as to benefit largely the Maritime Provinces as a whole there would be much to be said in their support. They might serve as an offset to the large sums spent on the Canadian Pacific and the St. Lawrence canals, in which the seaside Provinces have little or no interest. But in these cases the roads are so completely local in character that there is not even unanimity on the part of the Maritime representatives in regard to their utility. Surely it is time that all good citizens, without regard to geographical section or political party, should unite in saying that such misappropriation of the public funds must cease.

AMERICAN newspapers, almost without exception so far as we have observed, take for granted that the President's proclamation forbidding the catching of seals in the territorial waters of the United States in Behring Sea, is really meant to apply to the whole sea. This view is directly opposed to the interpretation given to the proclamation by Sir John A. Macdonald in Parliament. It is also opposed to the natural meaning of the language used in the proclamation, though, as we have before pointed out, that language is obviously, possibly purposely, ambiguous. Such expressions as the "territorial waters of the United States in Behring Sea"—we have not the proclamation now before us and are not sure of the exact phraseology—if occurring in a Greek or Latin Classic, might give rise to endless disputes among grammatical commentators as to its true meaning. Should the U.S. Government get into difficulty in attempting to enforce the Proclamation as its own people seem to understand it, this ambiguity would afford an excellent loophole for withdrawal from an untenable position. There can be little doubt that opportunity will be afforded during the coming season for the Administration to show practically in which of the two senses it means to enforce the proclamation, as Canadian sealers will, no doubt, be found in the neutral waters of Behring Sea. The position taken, as American journalists understand the matter, is so untenable, so grossly at variance not only with previous contentions of the United States against Russia and with its own doctrine of headlands as maintained in the fisheries dispute with Canada, but with the virtual admission of the Cleveland Cabinet in its correspondence with the Maritime Powers, that it seems incredible that an attempt should now be made to revive this old, exploded, Russian contention. Unless the ancient spirit of Great Britain has wholly departed she will never accept such a contention, though

she will, no doubt, readily come into any reasonable agreement for the protection of the seal fisheries.

THERE can be no doubt that the heroic struggle against "coffin-ships," commenced some ten or twelve years ago by Mr. Plimsoll, and carried on with such determination by him and others like-minded, has effected a great saving in life and property at sea. In a speech at the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a few weeks since, Mr. Chamberlain quoted returns showing that the number of lives lost in British and Colonial trading and fishing vessels had fallen from 3,512 in the year 1881-82, and from an average of about 2,700 for the last eleven years, to 2,071 in 1886-87, the last year for which returns were available. More significant still were the figures in regard to lives lost in missing vessels—vessels, that is, that founder at sea, and so were presumably not sea-worthy. In 1881 no less than 1,414 lives were lost in this way, while in 1886 the number had fallen to 356. No one would wish to detract one iota from the great credit due to Mr. Plimsoll in this matter, or to forget the outburst of noble rage by which, in defiance of Speaker and Rules of order, he compelled an indifferent Government and Parliament to listen to his indictment of the powerful shipowners, and to take up the cause of the poor sailors. In an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr. Thomas Scrutton, who is President of the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, maintains that the present annual loss of property at sea is not more, on a fair average estimate, than five and a quarter millions, instead of twelve millions, as Mr. Plimsoll stated a few weeks ago. Mr. Scrutton says that, as a matter of fact, shipowners are advancing by "leaps and bounds" to a position of greater safety in regard to both life and property at sea. This is, he claims, largely due to steamships taking the place of sailing vessels. Evidence of the fact is afforded in the statement that since 1874 the underwriters have actually reduced the rates of insurance from 50 per cent. to 25 per cent. on the chief rates and for ordinary cargoes. The movements of every vessel in the mercantile marine—which has a capital of a hundred millions invested in it—are carefully recorded, and are known to the underwriters.

SENTIMENT can hardly be expected to count for much in international negotiations in these days, especially in the case of two nations so intensely practical as the Americans and the Germans. Were it otherwise it would be natural to suppose that after the disasters to the respective fleets at Apia, the International Commissioners to meet shortly at Berlin would come together in a softened mood which would make the process of adjustment easy. The loss of life already incurred ought to suffice for the settlement of so trivial a dispute. The brave and noble conduct of the natives in aiding the rescue of both American and German sailors ought to have its effect in securing full recognition and generous consideration of Samoan rights. The question whether a mutual understanding shall be reached easily or with difficulty will depend mainly, no doubt, upon the readiness or the opposite of the Germans to relinquish all claim to a preponderant influence in Samoa. The instructions to the American Commissioners are, it is said, explicit to the effect that full Samoan autonomy shall be strictly maintained. The latest reports from both German and American sources indicate that the most serious difficulty may arise in connection with the question of the part taken by American citizens in the disorders which led to the killing of German marines by Mataafa's followers.

LORD LONSDALE having survived his perilous expedition towards the North Pole, it is now announced that two other noblemen, Hon. E. W. Everest and Count de Saintville, are about setting out on the same route, sanguine, of course, of success where their many brave predecessors have hitherto met only with disastrous failure. If men of means and leisure can find no more useful outlet for their overplus of courage and energy, and choose to go on such adventurous journeys at their own charges, no one, we suppose, has any right to forbid them. But the public have long since lost all faith in the possibility of any good result from such expeditions. The attempt to reach the suppositional Polar Sea must now be regarded by most thoughtful students of circumstances and probabilities as a thoroughly useless, and hence worse than useless, waste of resources and risk or sacrifice of lives which should have been useful to the world. An expedition into an unexplored but habitable region like Central

Africa has possibilities of usefulness which may be its more than sufficient warrant on both scientific and humanitarian grounds. But, even assuming the possible existence of a navigable Polar Sea, or a habitable Polar land, it is difficult to conceive of any benefit that could result to the world from the discovery. These regions are—and must remain for an æon, at least, practically inaccessible. The world will become terribly over-populated before a body of emigrants can be found willing to dare the horrors of the route, even though they could be persuaded that veritable Islands of the Blest lay at the other end.

RUMOURS of an ominous anti-foreign movement in China have been in circulation for some time past, and have been but too well supported by news of serious attacks upon the property of British and American residents in that country. Recent despatches received by Secretary Blaine from the United States Minister to China, intimate, it is said, that foreigners there are now living in perpetual danger, and that the minor outrages that have been of frequent occurrence may shortly be succeeded and eclipsed by much more formidable riots. These advices will cause less surprise than alarm. Nothing can be more natural than that as the masses of the people on the Chinese coasts come to understand the kind of treatment to which their fellow-countrymen have been subjected in America at the hands of legislators as well as mobs, they will be disposed to retaliate in kind. If once the destructive passions of the Mongolian are let loose, he cannot be expected to make any nice discrimination between English and Americans. One can hardly quarrel with the logic of the Celestials, should they be constrained to say that since their people are not permitted to enter the "Melican" land, the "Melican" must make his exit from the Flowery Kingdom. The only wonder is that the Heathen Chinese should hitherto have shewn so little of the vengeful spirit in his treatment of the representatives of the Christian races who refuse to tolerate the presence of Chinamen in their country. To the credit of the Chinese Government and officials it is recorded that they have hitherto shewn themselves ready, not only to protect white residents from outrage, but to indemnify them liberally for losses and injuries suffered through riotous attacks. It is probable that their awe of British warships—they cannot certainly have much dread of those of the Americans—may have contributed largely to this result. But it is too much to expect that, even with this potent influence in the background, the disciples of Confucius will continue indefinitely to practise the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.

EVERY careful observer of the currents of present-day thought must, it seems to us, see at least the beginning of a reaction against the materialistic drift of modern science. Some of the leaders of the new scientific school are tacitly or openly acknowledging the insufficiency of the Positivist theories to satisfy even the conditions of the problem of life as presented in the phenomena of sense-perception, much less those demands of the higher nature to which no materialistic speculations can make anyone wholly deaf. In an interesting article the *Christian Union* brings together a few of the evidences of this intellectual revolt against the bare and barren negations which have found so much favour with an influential class of modern scientists. A strong article of the kind alluded to has recently appeared in one of the French reviews, where one would have least expected to find it. The writer takes the position that modern science has, through its materialistic tendency, become a foe to the human intellect; that the tendency has been to shrivel up the higher activities of man, those of a spiritual or emotional nature, and to develop merely the powers of observation and scrutiny—faculties which belong to man's lower rather than to his higher nature. An article by Robert G. Ingersoll, in the *April North American Review*, affords an apposite illustration of this tendency. We do not, of course, suppose that Col. Ingersoll would be accepted as an authority in science, but for that very reason he is, perhaps, the better exemplar of the popular reading of the scientific teachings. In the article in question, Mr. Ingersoll reiterates, in all the various forms which his rhetorical versatility suggests, the statement that all "knowledge comes within the domain of the senses." This assumption lies at the basis of the whole argument in favour of Positivism. It never seems to have even occurred to him that there are such things as force, movement, matter, thought, of which the senses can take no cognizance, and materialism