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CURRENT TOPICS.

The announcement is made that one of the largest manufacturing establishments in Canada is about to remove a considerable part of its business across the line, in order to enable its proprietors to take advantage of the cheaper raw material now obtainable there. To this extent, at least, the new American tariff is proving successful. The lesson conveyed is a most important one. Whatever opinion one may have with regard to the question of protection or free trade in the abstract, it must be evident that, if Canada is ever to become, in any important degree, a manufacturing country, it must be made possible for her manufacturers to obtain their raw materials at least as cheaply as their next-door neighbours, else they never can hope to compete with those neighbours in foreign markets. And it is only

by producing for foreign markets that any great success in manufacturing can be had, for the home market is too small to admit of operations upon the scale of magnitude which modern conditions make necessary to success. We know of no evidence to show that our high taxes upon iron, in its various forms, are doing anything to promote the home production which was their primary object. In the absence of convincing evidence of that kind, it is inconceivable that the Dominion Government can continue the policy which is thus depriving the country of some of its most promising industries, for one moment after the opportunity comes to effect a change.

The papers contained, a few days since, an account of marvellous results wrought by an experiment in irrigation, made by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, on a portion of its garden, at Moose Jaw, in the North-West Territory. The picture drawn of the acre or two of irrigated land, teeming with vegetables of the most luxurious growth and finest quality, while all the surrounding farms were parched and unproductive, speaks more forcibly than columns of ordinary argument of the possibilities of that beautiful district under a system of irrigation, if such can be carried out at any expense within the limits of the practicable. Yet those who are familiar with the characteristics of the soil in that and similar sections of the North-West, and who have seen what it is capable of during the seasons of moderate rainfall, which are, it is to be feared, the exception rather than the rule, will not be amongst the incredulous readers. Should anyone be disposed to accept with reserve the results of a single experiment, abundant and indisputable facts of a similar character are now, we believe, happily available from the records of what has been effected in Colorado and other places in the American West, through the agency of simple watering processes. We have not yet seen reports of the proceedings of the Third National Irrigation Congress which recently met at Denver, but as our own North-West was, we believe, represented there, the facts brought out will, no doubt, soon be made known in the regions in which they will do the most good. Imagination almost fails to picture the results which may reasonably be expected to follow in the great prairie regions which now suffer from drought, if the preliminary difficulties can be overcome, and an efficient system of irrigation be brought into operation there.

At the time the last "copy" is required for this number of THE WEEK, the International Deep Waterways Convention has been organized and some preliminary business done, but it is too early to say anything of the results of the meeting. The attendance seems to be fairly representative of those sections of both countries which are naturally most interested in the question of cheap transport to the ocean ports. Without indulging in useless conjecture with reference to the issue of the deliberations, we may remark on the pleasing nature of the meeting, composed as it is of representative men of the two countries met to take counsel together in a liberal and friendly spirit for the promotion of their respective interests, which are in this case, happily, identical. Apart altogether from the primary object of the gathering, it may be said that the mere fact of the two countries amicably uniting their counsels and means for the carrying out of a great international commercial enterprise, should such a movement prove feasible, would be an edifying spectacle, and the carrying out of the project could not fail to have a powerful effect in doing away with those petty jealousies and animosities which it seems to delight some people in both countries to foster. Whether the interchange of views at this particular convention shall accomplish anything practical or not, the delegates may well feel that it is no small honor to be studying, as one of the American delegates intimated, to promote the welfare of a continent and of a race, by making it possible for coming generations to exchange their products, and have them reach the markets of the world by the cheapest of all ways, which is the water-way. The promoters of the movement are planning to give an inestimable boon to posterity. All must wish them great success.

Perhaps the most plausible argument urged by protectionists in favor of high tariffs is the familiar one that a lower tariff means increased importation, and that increased importation means less home production, consequently less employment and lower wages. This is dwelt on as if it were self-evident, by leading advocates of high or prohibitory tariffs, both in the United States and in Canada. That there is a fallacy somewhere in the argument is evident from such facts as the history of Great Britain under free trade. Had the theory held good in her case, the introduction of free trade should have been immediately followed by a falling off in employment and