

progressive America, the trend of commercial legislation should be wholly backward. It would surely be, to say the least, a regrettable mistake, should our own Government and Parliament condition their acceptance of the reciprocity about to be offered upon a purely commercial consideration such as that of reciprocity in coasting. The strong reasons for mutual freedom in giving aid to vessels in distress rest on grounds of humanity, not of commerce.

ONE of the significant political phenomena of the hour is the unusual amount of attention that is being given to the farmers and their special interests by politicians and the party newspapers. This is, in some measure, a new departure. It is evident that both in Canada and in the adjoining republic the farmers are becoming a force in politics to a degree hitherto unknown. Considering the extent to which Canada is an agricultural country, the comparative feebleness of the influence hitherto exerted by rural citizens in political affairs is astonishing, though on reflection it is not difficult to discover the causes. Those causes are largely summed up in one phrase: lack of organization and concerted action. This lack is largely due, as is easily understood, to the necessarily scattered condition of the farming population, which renders combination difficult. Under the pressure of modern conditions this difficulty is being, to a considerable extent, surmounted. Farmers are learning more and more the value of contact and comparison of notes in regard to agricultural affairs proper. As they thus become better acquainted with each other and with organized methods of work, the field of discussion is pretty sure to be gradually widened until it takes in all kinds of questions of political economy and of general politics. Following that will come soon the discovery that the farmers hold in their hands the balance of political power, and consequently the means of compelling the attention of politicians and seriously influencing the course of legislation. Judging rather from the tone of the party papers than from more reliable data, we infer that the political influence of the rural population in Canada is rapidly assuming large dimensions. In the United States the Farmers' Alliance, which was not organized as a national movement until last October, has developed remarkable strength. It is taking the place in the political arena that the Grange formerly held. The secretary of the Alliance, in a recent communication to the press, says that the organization is "strictly non-partisan," that it is "not working for the supremacy of any party, but to purify all parties." In the South the organization is particularly strong. A bitter campaign in South Carolina has lately resulted in the nomination of the Alliance candidate. In Georgia a similar success has been attained. In the North the Alliance has not developed so rapidly, but is, nevertheless, steadily gaining ground. The omen is, on the whole, a good one. It is fitting as well as inevitable that as the farmers gain in education and general intelligence they should become in a much larger measure than heretofore influential in the Local and the National Legislatures.

TWO recent strikes, one in Nova Scotia, the other in New York State, bring afresh to the surface the question of the propriety or necessity of State interference in the case of such strikes as affect not only the parties immediately concerned, but large sections of the public as well. The principle involved is, in its essential features, the same in the two cases, but the strike on the New York Central brings the relation of the public to the quarrel into unusually bold relief. In that case the action of one or two hundred men not only paralyzed for days the business of a great railroad company, but stopped or greatly hindered all the outgoing and incoming travel and traffic on one of the chief arteries of communication of the great City of New York, and, without a moment's warning, inflicted great inconvenience upon all who had occasion to use the road, and serious injury upon many. It is immaterial to the question we are now considering whether the strikers' grievance in either case is a real and serious one or not. The only difference that would make, so far as relates to the present point of view, is that on the one supposition the strikers, on the other the companies would be responsible for the consequences. We are now considering the consequences themselves. These are, under the present system, somewhat as if all the business and travel of a city thoroughfare were to be obstructed while some dispute between a cabman and his employer were being settled by argument or fisticuffs. The public verdict in such a case would be quickly given, to the effect that, without prejudice to the rights of either disputant,

the quarrel must be settled in some place and manner which would not interfere with the public convenience. In New York the incident will probably give a new impetus to the contention that all railways should become the property of the State. That would be a very serious innovation, though a good deal may be said in its favour. Even if that were feasible it would not meet such a case as that of the Springhill coal mines and hundreds of similar ones. One practical query which suggests itself is, Why should not the employees in all such cases be engaged on the explicit understanding that the engagement could not be terminated by either party without due notice? If to make such agreement individually would virtually deprive labourers of the advantages of union and put them at the mercy of employers, might not the engagement be made in some way through the unions, on such terms as would not prevent the possibility of a concerted strike after due notice, for the strike must be recognized as a necessary and legitimate weapon when fairly used? If this be impracticable the only alternative seems to be compulsory arbitration. This has many able advocates and is probably growing in favour. Evidently some means must be found of preventing the serious injury so frequently inflicted upon the unoffending public by sudden and prolonged strikes in industries which are of a semi-public character.

AFTER all that has been written and may be written about the great Roman Catholic prelate who has just passed away, the life of John Henry Newman will remain a mystery, except to the few who may be specially qualified by nature to enter into sympathy with the experiences of a spiritual personality so nearly unique. We say "spiritual" rather than "mental" because we are convinced that the key to Dr. Newman's career is to be found in his spiritual as distinguishable from his mental characteristics. We have no wish to enter the field of polemical theology, but we shall not, we think, unduly disparage any claim to a rational basis which may be made on behalf of the religious system to which he became so influential a convert, when we express the opinion that Dr. Newman was driven to the Roman Catholic fold by the force of religious rather than logical considerations. In the exercise of that free agency, which, in later years, he described as man's special endowment, he found himself constrained to choose between two divergent courses, the one leading to an arena of constant intellectual unrest, the other to a haven of permanent spiritual repose. The emphasis must at every point, as it seems to us, be placed upon the word "spiritual," for, though Dr. Newman did not shrink from the most vigorous exercise of his subtle and powerful intellect, his nature was so constituted that he could never stop short in the religious sphere of what stood to him as infallible certainty. The devout mind which resolves at all cost and hazard to maintain the right of private judgment must accept, as one consequence, the possibility of being from time to time tossed hither and thither on a sea of uncertainty. On a thousand occasions and in reference to a thousand obtrusive questionings, it is obliged to take refuge in the limitations of the human faculties and the imperfection of human knowledge, and to console itself with the assurance, "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." But there are certain natures which can never endure the thought of resting in, still less of contending for that which may, after all, prove to be but a half-truth, or but one side of a many-sided truth, or even no truth at all. The soul cries out for certainty, and in the anguish of its unrest and longing persuades itself that, because uncertainty is so painful and unsatisfying, certainty must be attainable. For natures of this type such ideas as those of discipline and development through struggle have no affinity. They cannot understand or accept life as a school for development or an evolutionary stage. One does not need to go to the Roman Catholic communion for examples of the facility with which even strong minds can bring themselves ultimately to believe that which they wish to believe or are persuaded it is duty to believe. Dr. Newman's frank declarations in his later years that he had found the rest and peace for which he sought, his emphatic denials that his mind was still subject to doubts or misgivings on theological questions show how complete was his success in attaining the place and attitude, we have almost said the spiritual Nirvana, for which his soul had longed. To what extent such peace, attainable through mental surrender rather than mental conquest, is either desirable in itself or conducive to true spiritual growth and influence is a question into which we need not enter. Dr. Newman's noble sincerity and honesty are admitted by

all, but the comparative failure of his religious influence in leading others to his own way of thinking would seem to show that the rest he attained by accepting another human authority as an infallible guide is a rest possible for but few of those who have not been specially educated from childhood into the mental condition which renders such a faith possible.

THE British protectorate of Zanzibar is already bringing forth good fruits. On the first day of the current month a decree signed by the Sultan and abolishing the slave-trade throughout his dominions was placarded all over the city. This measure, said to be the most important ever passed by a Mohammedan ruler against slavery, was published without previous notice and took the natives by surprise. It is noted by some of the English newspapers that the first of August, the date of the decree, was the fifty-sixth anniversary of the final abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, and also the day chosen for unveiling the statue of the late Hon. W. E. Forster, a sturdy abolitionist, on the Thames embankment. These coincidences were probably designed. The Sultan's decree consists of nine articles. From the date of its promulgation the sale and exchange of slaves are absolutely prohibited. The houses which have been used for the purposes of the traffic are to be closed, and slave-brokers who fail to observe the prohibition are rendered liable to deportation. All slaves now in servitude are to become free at the death of their present owners, unless the deceased leave lawful children to inherit them. They cannot be disposed of by will, or sold after their master's death. Owners convicted of ill-treating their slaves incur a heavy penalty, and all their slaves are to be set at liberty. Every subject of Zanzibar who marries a British subject is declared incapable of possessing slaves, and all slaves possessed by such persons are to be set at liberty. Still further, every slave is to have the right of purchasing his own freedom at a reasonable price. An earnest of good faith in the matter was given on the next day after the publication of the decree by the clearing out and closing of the houses which had been used for the traffic. On the Monday following some armed men entered the Custom House, tore down the decree affixed to the door and fled. The placard was immediately replaced and a party sent in pursuit of the culprits. With this exception the natives seem to have accepted the decree with a good grace. Whether the British people, with their intense hatred of slavery in all its forms, will accept a measure which contemplates the indefinite continuance of slavery as a domestic institution and contents itself with prohibiting the traffic only remains to be seen. Possibly the stride may be thought long enough for a first step and more radical measures may be postponed to a future day.

THE telegraphic summary of Lord Salisbury's last despatch to Secretary Blaine, completing the Behring Sea correspondence to date, contains two points of considerable importance to the argument. The one is the statement that historical documents are quoted in the despatch to prove that England refused to admit any part of the Russian claim asserted in 1821 to marine jurisdiction and exclusive fishing rights throughout the whole extent of that claim from Behring Straits to the 51st parallel, and that, as a consequence, the Convention of 1825 was regarded by both sides as a renunciation on the part of Russia of that claim in its entirety. If Lord Salisbury's proofs clearly establish this and show that the British Government always claimed freedom of navigation and fishing in what is now known as Behring Sea, outside the limit of a marine league from the coast, they effectually dispose of the most plausible part of Mr. Blaine's laboured historical contention. The sentence which follows, in which Lord Salisbury says that "It is impossible to admit that the right to fish and catch seals in the high seas can be held to be abandoned by a nation from the mere fact that for a certain number of years it has not suited the subjects of that nation to exercise such right," condenses in a few words the common-sense and conclusive reply to Mr. Blaine's singularly weak argument based on the alleged fact—which by the way is itself open to question—that the British sealers did not, until within a comparatively recent period, attempt to ply their vocation in the disputed waters. It is well that the correspondence closes with a fair and frank offer, on behalf of the British Government, to submit the whole matter to impartial arbitration. It is not easy to see how the American Secretary, who but a little while ago was trying to bring about an agreement with the representatives of American States for the settle-