

TRUTH.

OLD SERIES—17TH YEAR.

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TRUTH'S MUSINGS.

A Bill has been introduced in the Senate at Washington providing, among other things, for the free importation of coal, lumber, and salt in the United States, the coal exemption not to go into effect so far as Canada is concerned until the American coal is admitted duty free into Canada. The Bill is certainly one of great importance to Canada. So far as the lumber trade is concerned there are some who sincerely question the advantage of encouraging it to much extent, for our country is now being stripped of its lumber at a rapid rate, and before many years pass there will be good reason to regret that it is gone.

The advantage to the salt trade of Canada of freely opening up the United States markets, especially those of the West, will be very great. There are in this Province vast salt beds, of hundreds of square miles extent, and of great depth. The supply appears to be practically inexhaustible but with our own limited markets the salt industry cannot be developed to anything like its full extent. The West would afford a splendid market for our salt beds along the shores of Lake Huron but for the almost prohibitory tariff of the United States. Let the duty but be taken off and a vast salt industry would spring up, especially in the Counties of Huron and Bruce. Shipments can be made from there to Chicago in cargoes in bulk, and the sales would be at remunerative rates but for the duty deducted. Last year there was exported from Canada 197,185 bushels of salt, the product of the Dominion, and with the exception of 26 bushels from Quebec the whole of this was sent from Ontario. From our salt fields many times this quantity can be annually produced if the market is only opened up for it.

It is much to be hoped that the coal proposals will be adopted at Washington. It is quite probable that a proposal of reciprocity in coal would be satisfactory all round. The Nova Scotia coal producers would, probably, be very glad to forego the advantages of our present coal tariff, and the Canadian demand that it may bring them, if the Boston and other Eastern States markets were only thrown open to them. On the other hand the Pennsylvania coal dealers find a more immediate market in Ontario than in the Eastern States; and the Ontario manufacturers would be correspondingly benefited by the changes thus made. Last year Sir Charles Tupper put forth a very ingenious theory in the House to demonstrate that the coal consumers in Ontario were actually getting their American coal all the cheaper because of the present coal import duties, as it tended to make our markets a strong competitive point, and all hands sold low on that very account. The theory was generally repro-

duced all through the country and applauded by a good many of the politicians, but TRUTH is decidedly of opinion that all this would be pretty carefully reconsidered and remodelled if the fact becomes at all apparent that the Nova Scotia coal fields can find an open market elsewhere.

There is, just now, evidently a good deal of feeling in Manitoba that ought not to be overlooked by our men in authority. For some months past our party newspapers have been busy, as they usually are, in magnifying or minifying the importance of the news of discontent from that Province, and the public have become so accustomed to that kind of persistent misrepresentation that not much attention was paid to it. The events of the last few days at Winnipeg leave no room to doubt, however, in regard to the real intensity of the feeling of discontent. That a large number of farmers from the various scattered sections of that Province should meet to devise some means of bringing about a change is of itself a significant fact, and it is still more significant that there was a good deal of diversity of opinion about the propriety of raising the standard of the disruption of the Dominion as the most effectual means of obtaining such measures as they claim in justice they should have. It may be that the effect of the legislation at Ottawa has been more severely felt in Manitoba than many of us have imagined.

The heavy import tax on agricultural implements was scarcely felt anywhere else, as the other Provinces did not require to import them to any extent. It is so, also, in regard to several other important branches of manufactures. It may turn out that our manufacturers, in their anxiety to command the Manitoba markets over-reached the bounds of prudence. In consequence of the great distance of that Province from our manufacturers, and the very great cost of transportation it was deemed necessary to put on a high rate of duty, in order to leave much margin of profit at all. The high tariff may have proved very pleasant to manufacturers here, but very galling to the consumers in a new country where money is very hard to procure, and where manufactured articles must be very dear at the best.

Probably, however, the railway monopoly policy of the Canadian Pacific and the Government have done more than anything else to bring on something like a crisis. It is not reasonable to expect that a free, enterprising people like the majority of those making up the population of the West, would long consent to being confined to a single line of railway, or submit to the policy of disallowing all Acts of their own Provincial Legislature in chartering other projected roads. The Hon. Minister of Railways has recently given an assurance in the House of Commons that as soon as the C. P. R. is completed around the north shore of

Lake Superior, the monopoly will end. But it is not now probable that the promise of something of years hence will satisfy the present feeling. The Railway company may know its own business very well, but it is doubtful if it may not find that a present relaxation both as regards the railway monopoly and the land monopoly would be a very judicious move. The land regulations of the Government, too, ought to be carefully considered at once. It would be a pity to chafe and gall the feelings of the adventurous pioneers who are now doing so much to build up a great Province, or several great Provinces to the west of us, if it can be reasonably avoided.

On the other hand the tax payers of the old Provinces of the Dominion have good right to feel that they should be treated with some consideration so far as all this business is concerned. Great burdens of debt were laid on their shoulders to purchase this territory from the Hudson Bay Company, and still greater burdens to open it all up by the great national railway, besides the heavy expense of providing, in part at least, for the survey and the government of the country. The tax payers have surely gone as far as can be reasonably expected of them. A railway with a monopoly may be much better than no railway at all, and the present land system better than no system.

Toronto can now boast of a Free Library creditable to the city and to the Province of which it is the capital. Toronto will be a much more desirable home to the man of intelligence and the lover of literature because of this new institution. It is encouraging to see with what zeal and interest our leading citizens and our largest tax payers have gone into this free library business. Probably in the end the tax payers will find this open library and reading room, free to every citizen, a good investment. It may save taxes instead of increasing them. Burke remarked years ago, that education is a cheap system of government. The uneducated citizens are, as a rule, the dangerous and expensive ones; to guard whom police and other officers require to be employed and paid, and to punish the crimes of whom many heavy burdens of taxation are required. Let our young men become attached to our Library, let their evenings be spent pleasantly there, and let the taste for a pure and healthy literature be thus cultivated, and the community will be the better, the pleasanter, the safer, and the more easily and cheaply governed.

The Lasker resolutions have just been returned to the Washington Senate from Bismarck. Of course there is yet quite a ripple of excitement in political circles over the whole matter, but it must soon have its day. After such a snub from Bismarck it is possible that the Senate may be somewhat more inclined to mind its own business. Dr. Lasker was a prom-

inent German politician and the leader of the republic party in that country. He had been a powerful opponent of Bismarck and the present German government, and had often bitterly denounced its rule. When the Senate adopted resolutions approving highly of the course of such a man, as being much in the interests of the German people and then sent them to Bismarck to present to the House, little wonder that a man of his arbitrary spirit should promptly return them again. The resolutions were purely voluntary at best, and possibly intended by their authors for kite-flying purposes, among the German voters in the United States, and they may serve political ends just as well as though Bismarck had presented them and then laid them away in a musty official pigeon hole.

The general supposition has been that if woman was but given the franchise the end of the legalized liquor traffic would not be far off. It is just possible that it may turn out to be one of the many popular mistakes. In Wyoming Territory the women have had the full right of the franchise for years, and the results are always reported quite satisfactory. It turns out, however, that in Wyoming temperance legislation is not so far advanced as in some other localities west where women have no voice in the elections. A local option bill was recently introduced into the Wyoming Legislature and defeated by a good majority. In view of these facts, it is just possible that the new franchise agitation may not prove nearly as desirable to some of our politicians, and not nearly as much to be avoided by some others.

The foot-and-mouth disease has broken out among the cattle on some of the Kansas ranges, and there is a good deal of consternation in regard to the matter. A greater calamity could hardly have occurred to that State. Cattle raising is the great industry of Kansas, and the herds there are in such vast numbers, and so little separated from each other that a terribly infectious disease, once fairly spread, would prove a general disaster. As it is loss by even the rumour of such a fact will be serious. The English cattle market will be closed more effectually than before against American cattle, and all trade with this country must be entirely cut off. Canadian cattle raisers will have to use very great precautions for some time to come, as the epidemic is now in existence in England, in the Eastern States and in the West, and importations from any of these directions would be attended with serious danger.

Special attention is directed to page 22, and the large rewards there offered for answers to Bible questions. The leading reward this time is an elegant Piano. The next a Cabinet organ, and then other very valuable rewards follow. Try your skill. Only \$1 required for a six months subscription.