

of Error and Appeal, and to amend the Assessment Law by striking out a number of exemptions from taxation. The great bulk of the measures are of minor importance. In fact, we have to repeat, what we have said on a former occasion, that there is altogether too much tinkerage of the laws in this legislative body - this tinkering being undertaken, too often, by members who are doubtless intelligent enough in their way, but who are not at all in law making. The effect, of this is, that you can hardly find anybody, except professionals, who clearly understand what even our Municipal and Assessment taxes are, let alone others with which the public are less familiar. This is an evil which a Attorney-General Macdonald, as head of the Government, should take care is not allowed to increase, for constant changes in the laws are almost as objectionable as bad laws themselves.

**MONTREAL PETROLEUM REFINING COMPANY.**

A PROJECT is at present on foot to form a company in Montreal, with the above title, for the purpose of refining oil for shipment to the English and Continental markets. The promoter is Mr. H. Benjamin, who has for years given his time and attention to the practical questions of the production of crude oil in Canada, and of various methods of refining it in such a manner as to enable Canada Refined Oil to compare favourably with, if not to surpass, the best American. This gentleman has recently returned from England and Germany after a residence of some 18 months in the former country, during which time he has accomplished two noteworthy results. He has, in the first place, by actual work, study and experiment in the laboratory, become possessed of a means of refining Canada Petroleum so as to make it absolutely colourless, and to deodorize it so completely as to leave it free from all the unpleasant smell which has hitherto been so much in the way of the successful prosecution of the foreign trade in this article. We have seen a sample of this oil, and can testify as to its superiority over anything that has been hitherto produced in Canada. In the second place, Mr. Benjamin has been able to make such financial and commercial arrangements in London, Antwerp, &c., as to secure a market for an unlimited quantity of such oil as he is prepared to manufacture, with privilege of drawing against shipments to an amount more than enough to cover the prime cost of the oil, and all charges of ocean freight, insurance, &c., &c.

The business of refining oil is one of very great capacity of enlargement, the boundaries being only limited by the extent of the market, which is of a most gigantic character, by the amount of capital employed and consequent extent of works, and by the supply of crude oil. That there is any danger of the latter being soon exhausted is not likely. Even with the very uncertain market for Canada refined, and necessary for the crude, production has continued to be large and steady. With an assured market, the number of wells sunk would be greatly increased, more capital would be invested, and the working of the wells already in operation would be placed on a more economical and permanent footing. With the discoveries which have already been made, and put in practice, in the successful refining of Canada petroleum, and with the consequent increase of the foreign trade, a steady advance has taken place in the price of crude, and a still further advance must undoubtedly take place, there being now so large a profit on the operations of those refiners for whose oil there is a steady sale. But we think the advance will be slow, the production of oil being capable of very rapid increase, an increase sure to take place as soon as the business began to be a permanently profitable one, instead of a risky speculation.

We hope Montreal capitalists may be found who will subscribe the necessary capital, which, by the way, need not be a very heavy amount—\$200,000 being named as the sum required; and from the estimate of cost of works, &c., we have seen, even a smaller sum would be sufficient to secure a turn out of 1,500 barrels a week. The only thing, however, which requires to be demonstrated is the profitability of the proposed operations. That assured, there will be, we fancy, no difficulty about obtaining the money, of which the supply seeking investment in anything of a paying character is at present large; and we know of no one who has more practical knowledge of the oil business, or one better able to give conclusive testimony, on the question of profit, than Mr. Benjamin.

**THE DOMINION PARLIAMENT**

HAS been called to meet for the despatch of business on the 15th of February. Everything indicates that the session will be a short one. The results of the elections in Newfoundland will render further legislation in regard to the admission of that Province unnecessary at present; and we have heard nothing further about the admission of British Columbia or Prince Edward Island. It is likely some legislation may be required for the North-west Territory, the disturbances existing there being of an admittedly embarrassing character. Unless circumstances have arisen to change Ministerial intentions, we incline to the opinion that Sir Francis Hincks will introduce a new general Banking Law, and that this will be the chief measure of the session. The secret of the character of this measure has been well kept, but of this there are not a few indications—it will differ very materially from Mr. Ross's Bill of last session. The rumour that several Toronto bankers contributed to secure the election of the new Finance Minister, would indicate that they approve of his proposed banking policy. This rumour we have never seen contradicted, and if true, it very clearly indicates that these bankers and Sir Francis disposed to take their view of the question. Very few notices have yet been given of application for private bills during the approaching session. Among the railway notices, we observe one asking for a charter for the "Dominion Pacific Railway," and another for a line from Pombina or vicinity (where Governor McDougall is) via Fort Garry, to a point on Lake Winnipeg or the Saskatchewan river. The Dominion Pacific Railway is proposed to run "from a point on or near Lake Superior, via Red River to a point on the eastern boundary of British Columbia, with power to improve the navigation leading to and from Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods." These notices are significant. Many important inferences might be drawn from them—but the reader will be quite able to draw them for himself. The Great Western and Grand Trunk Railways both give notice of bills—the former to incorporate a company to construct a tunnel under, or bridge across, the Detroit River, the same to be worked by steam or horse-power for passengers and freight, and the latter to legalize an agreement with the Buffalo and Lake Huron Company, settling all past disputes. Divorce bills promise to be more than usually abundant. Three notices have already been given all on the ground of adultery; the applicants are: T. E. Martin, barrister, Cayuga; Jean Baptiste Livernols, Montreal; and Robert Sbarman Goderich. Hon. John Young gives notice for an act to revive the "St. Lawrence and Champlain Canal Company," and the *Banquet du Peuple*, for one to confirm their charter. The Canada Central Railway Company requires more time in which to complete its road and desires an act passed for that purpose. With the exception of a notice from Quebec for changes in the act regarding pilots, these comprise all the private bills of which notice has been given. The bill of fare is certainly meagre, but several of the subjects are highly important.

**QUIXOTIC PROJECTS.**

A GREAT deal of downright *boak* is being written and spoken just now, both in England and the Colonies, in regard to the organization of some body to meet regularly in London, which shall have power to settle all questions affecting the Empire and the Colonies. Some urge representation of the Colonies in the Imperial Parliament; others favour the appointment of a Minister for each Colony, who shall reside in London, and manage the business between the Colony and the Mother Country; and the last proposition we have seen, is the foundation of what has been called an Imperial Joint Committee. A Mr. Kilgour, resident in "Auld Reekie," proposes that this committee should consist of 200 members! One-half of these, he thinks, should be selected from the United Kingdom, and of those representing the Colonies, some of them should be nominated by the Crown! We shall not spend time in discussing such a scheme. We consider it simply absurd, as we do nine-tenths of the projects which are constantly being originated. We doubt if any single Colony would willingly consent to give to any body meeting in London power to regulate its tariff, or involve it in taxation. We have now been too long used to self-governance to yield up any of our privileges, and any body which met in London, pretending to represent the Colonies, would soon produce five times the ill-

feelities which now exist. We believe good might result from a consultation between leading colonial and English statesmen, to decide on what the Colonial policy of Great Britain shall hereafter be, and what shall be the relative shares which shall be paid towards colonial purposes, but anything like a representative body, meeting regularly to arrange tariffs, &c., is simply impracticable. There is, moreover in disguising the fact, that what are the Mother Country's interests in regard to commercial questions may not be those of the Colonies, and that the people inhabiting the latter very naturally incline to look after their own interests. We observe that Earl Granville recently denied that his party proposed to send the Colonies adrift. That may be true, but they certainly have taken a very strange way of late of manifesting their desire for a continuance of the present relations. We are convinced that all so-called schemes for the organization of the empire are of a quixotic character, and that the adoption of a self-off Colonial policy by the Imperial Government, and the continuance of the present unaltered condition of Colonial Parliaments, are all which the circumstances require.

**WHAT QUEBEC SHOULD DO,**

SIR GEORGE E. CARTIER, at the banquet given him by the merchants of Quebec, said some noteworthy things, which deserve the attention of those interested in the trade of the "ancient capital," and the manufactures of the country. As an industry, the fisheries of our sea coast have never received the attention they deserve from the merchants and capitalists of Quebec or Montreal. Quebec, as ship-building for trans-oceanic trade declines, from iron supereroding wood in construction, should vie with New England towns in its fleet of fishing craft. Unless our neighbours change their policy, our people will soon have a monopoly of the fisheries along the coast of the Dominion, and Quebec, more easily than Montreal, can furnish the fleet to utilize them.

Our manufacturers are told to seek a market for themselves—not helplessly to wait for the government to make it. This is sound advice. As Sir George said, the government of one people cannot compel another people to trade with them. It may aid the merchant and manufacturer, but the skill and the enterprise of the merchant should be especially directed to ascertaining where markets for the products of a country can be found. It is thus, and thus only, that their labour becomes really productive; thus only they serve their country.

**Sir George Cartier said:—**

"Quebec merchants should observe they will shortly have a new era opened to them. They will soon be in a position to be masters of the fisheries (loud applause.) My opinion is that 10,000 of 12,000 of the population of Quebec ought to be busy about the Gulf, Bay of Chaleur, and the other fishing grounds, doing the work which the Maine and Massachusetts people are doing at present. (Applause.) The cod fishery has done much for the prosperity of these States whose children have toiled in a region belonging to us. I hope this city will have to take to these fisheries soon, as well as to manufactures. There is no place in the Dominion where labour for seven months of the year can be procured as cheaply as in Quebec.

A Voice—Give us a foreign trade.  
Sir G. Cartier—You have it. Look what my friend Mr. Stephen, of Montreal, has done. He started cloth factories at Cornwall, to which he had to bring labour from a distance, and, notwithstanding, can undersell the Scotch and English weaver-makers. (Applause.) The Manchester and Sheffield men approached me in England with over-protecting the wool and other industries. I told them the maximum duties were 16 per cent, the same as their own. Then how comes it, they asked, you can undersell us? (We cannot make as cheap as you if they say.) Mr. Stephen sends to Manchester. The last public accounts show that Canada exported \$300,000 of woollen goods for the year, principally to England and the United States. (Cheers.) You cannot create a trade with other nations against their will. Your only chance is cheap labour, and manufacturing better articles at a less price than theirs. Now, nowhere in Canada, could this be better done than at Quebec. (Hear, hear.) Manufacturers frequently ask for protection. It is absurd, as is also the notion of extreme free trade. As to it, you must pay the amount of your duty to the Government by direct taxation. With extreme protection you destroy your foreign trade, as the States have done, and this again leads to direct taxation. We are not going to commit such a folly. We have adopted the proper policy of imposing merely an income duty, not a protective one. With regard to English labour, merchants here are paying 20 per cent more for its products than five years ago. The change is owing to the trade associations in England, which have put prices up to such an extent that manufacturers are obliged to compete with cotton and cotton with wool, to act at acceptable rates. They give you apparently the same article as before, but not as good a one. As to Quebec, if Sir Glover