

had any objections to urge against the form of the British proposals, the Government was perfectly prepared to review the whole matter, with a sincere desire to arrive at a conclusion which would be satisfactory to all concerned." Mr. Chamberlain made a similar promise to a deputation of colonial agents, including Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, Canada's High Commissioner.

News of a discovery of rich gold fields in Kamschatka, reaches America via Paris, where presumably, if there be anything in the story, intending operators have been laying plans for future development. Russia, according to the report published, will here depart from her usual method of working the mines directly for the benefit of the State, probably for the reason that she has plenty of this kind of work in hand elsewhere. The mines, it is given out, are equal in richness to those of the Klondike. Have they really been tested, so as to make this information reliable? The Russian Minister of Agriculture is quoted as saying that the climate is milder than that of the Klondike. This is probable. The difference in latitude may not be great; and in the same latitude the climate of Kamschatka, with the sea of Okhotsh on the west, and Behring Sea on the east, would be better than that of the Klondike. The only guide we have to the situation of the new mines is that the peninsula of Kamschatka lies between 50 and 60 degrees north; the difference in longitude between that given of the new discovery and the Klondike is not great enough to permit of any considerable difference of climate between the two places. The new gold discovery in Kamschatka comes at a time when Russia is enabled to profit by Canadian experience in the Yukon district; and the plan of working reported may have its advantages. Russia may deem it advisable to prevent a rush of free miners to the region; and perhaps the best means of doing this would be to have the mines worked by companies, as proposed. The companies might or might not be able to keep out free miners, prospecting and operating generally on their own account. But if this could be done, so near to the United States, it would be a new experience, and it would go far to show that the American prospector had suddenly changed his character.

The Anglo-Russian Treaty that was said to have settled the Chinese question, has been swiftly followed by new complications. But this time, the trouble is primarily between Russia and China. The trouble is over a demand for a railway concession in Manchuria, which Russia asks but which China begins by refusing to grant, adding it is alleged, that she can no longer regard Russia's professions of friendship as reliable. Precisely what demand Russia has made, the British Government is not advised of. People who still talk of the open door, forget that the new arrangement made, under the sanction of the treaty, substitutes spheres of influence in its place. How far that influence is to extend is a matter on which China has the right to be heard; but the theoretical right is not of much value unless it can be maintained against any hostile pressure that may be exerted by the other governments to obtain railroad and other concessions. That Russia, in this new demand has done something that England is bound to oppose is the first conclusion of people who do not stop to think, and who form decisions without knowing all the facts. What the attitude of the British Government will be towards Russia's new demand on China will depend upon the facts, when they come to be fully known. Possibly it is just such a demand as the treaty contemplates, in both the signatory powers, possibly not. Wait and see.

MUNICIPAL BORROWINGS.

An observant correspondent in Western Ontario draws attention to the free borrowings of town municipalities of late years, and sounds a note of warning which it may be well to heed. He writes: "Among the abuses that you are asked from time to time to expose, let me mention one. Do you not think it is about time to call a halt to the borrowing of cities, towns and villages of the Dominion. This borrowing cannot go on forever, even if money is cheap and easily got. Nearly every city, town or village must be piling up indebtedness very rapidly. You can scarcely pick up a paper but you will find debentures for sale of some municipality. Surely there must be a day of reckoning for this borrowing. Most of the municipalities have a debenture debt of ten to twenty per cent. of their assessment already, and the taxes in these towns and villages are seldom below twenty mills, and range from fifteen up to thirty mills.

"I can tell you that it is becoming very burdensome to the ratepayer. Whereas counties and townships which have assisted railways, built gravel roads, county buildings, iron and steel bridges in former years have nearly all of them wiped out their indebtedness, and you seldom see county or township debentures offered for sale.

"A great many laud what they call our grand system of Ontario schools, but in nine cases out of ten you will find that man who does so is not a large ratepayer and has not a large family to send to the schools. Even admitting that we have 'the finest system on earth,' are we not paying a little too dear for our whistle? The school tax in towns and villages is from seven to nine mills on the dollar, on the assessment, about a third of our whole taxes. The pace is too fast."

LUMBER AT THE CHAUDIERE.

Law making and lumber making are the two principal industries of Ottawa. For some months the law makers have been busy at work on Parliament Hill, but it was only last week that the season's operations were opened at the Chaudiere. Some of the mills have a full staff of men now employed during the day and will soon have their night shifts employed. Other mills are yet busied with preparations for the new season, and the plant will be in operation within a week or ten days.

The season this year is unusually late in opening. The water in the river has been very high and considerable difficulty has been found in getting the logs down the river. The first raft of the year, 22,000 logs, was more than a fortnight later than the first raft a year ago. Although late in commencement, it appears to be a general opinion that the season of 1899 will be one of activity. There has been a large cut of logs on the Upper Ottawa and its tributaries and the mills will not be idle through lack of material.

A number of barges are now loading lumber at the yards, a part of which is for the home market. It is a fact worthy of record that the Ottawa lumbermen are paying more than usual attention this year to the requirements of Ontario centres. The demand for lumber from different towns and cities on both sides of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence, it is said, will exceed that of former years, both by reason of unusual activity in building operations and the partial or complete exhaustion of sources of supply previously drawn upon. British retailers are reported to be doing a good business. Stocks in the different ports have been well cleaned up and the quays offer plenty of room for the spring importations.