

Prominent Topics.

United States Tariff Tinkering.

"'Twould be a miraculous tariff measure that could know its own name—much less its father. The Aldrich amendments in the Senate are leaving less and less of the original Payne proposals. In the first draft of the Aldrich bill, iron ore was taken from the free list; now wood pulp is also to be taken from it, and hides, and coal, and oil. "If this process goes on and is consummated," groans the New York Evening Post, "we shall soon be back to the Dingley bill, or worse."

Unite the good features of the Payne and Aldrich proposals, says the President, and improve upon the resulting combination. Whereat, the Evening Post recalls the historic conflict between House and Senate about the duty on coal. The House had voted 25 cents a ton, the Senate 50. Neither would recede. So they compromised on 75 cents a ton! Verily, as Macaulay tells us, government consists of compromise.

Canada and its Resources.

And now comes word from Washington that representatives of eleven States on the Canadian border are at the Capital urging Congressman Payne and Senator Aldrich to provide a proper kind of reciprocity measure as a part of the tariff bill. The reciprocity advocates are carrying out instructions given them at the meeting in Detroit two weeks ago, which was held to consider means to foster trade with Canada and which made a special point of demanding free trade in coal, lumber and barley.

Many attending the Detroit conference seemed to think that if only Washington could be convinced that reciprocity were desirable, no other argument would be necessary at Ottawa. An address by Mr. J. A. Macdonald, editor of the Toronto Globe, may have done something to disabuse the minds of the delegates of this idea.

"When your McKinley tariff suddenly killed Canadian trade in important lines," he said, "serious injury was inflicted on many Canadian industries. Our people then sought markets elsewhere. Formerly they traded South; now they trade East and West. They have proved themselves, their strength and their resources. They are no longer dependent on any one market."

A new rendering of an old proverb is just now being conned by many allied industries in the United States—to wit, that you can't both chew your pulp and have it. But it is hoped to escape starvation by taking "the other fellow's."

Having recklessly ground up the greater part of pulp wood available at home, fresh supplies are hoped for by allowing free entry of Canada's store.

Ungava.

The Legislative Assembly has passed a unanimous resolution in favour of the annexation of Ungava. Our legislators are not often unanimous, and when they do agree it is apt to be on something of questionable wisdom. This is a case in point. Quebec has more territory to-day than its government can administer to advantage and the greater part of which sadly needs development. The enormous increase in area which will result from the annexation of Ungava may lead to the raising of serious constitutional questions regarding federal representation.

Military Drill in Schools.

Our esteemed contemporary the Montreal Gazette says: "An emphatic if not a large body of objectors to military drill in schools in Ontario might have its fears allayed by dropping theories and looking at facts for a while. The Mount St. Louis College, of Montreal, one of the largest boys' school in the province, has made military drill a feature of its work outside of its classes for years, and has neither become jingoistic nor blood-thirsty, nor has it in any way lost public confidence. The drill sergeant, when kept to his duty, is really as harmless as the mathematical master."

The drill sergeant is not only harmless, he is beneficial to the student in more ways than one. The habit of discipline, of prompt obedience to orders, is really essential to a good business training. No boy will become a worse business man for a little military training. Anybody who is familiar with the conditions prevailing in the British army, will remember the wonders accomplished by "Sergeant What's his name" in converting the dull, stupid, awkward, rustic into a bright, well set up, full private. Nearly every man who serves his time in the army is a better man for civil life afterwards. This, by the way, is a strong argument in favour of universal military training. Give the schoolboys a military training by all means.

Grand Trunk Outlook.

Now that Grand Trunk is showing steady gains in gross traffic earnings over those of a year ago, it is interesting to note that the betterment is reported as largely due to increased movement in high-class freight. Naturally, in a time of industrial depression, the Grand Trunk suffered more acutely than lines more directly serving a grain-growing territory. As The Economist of London remarked the other day, considering how closely the road depends on traffic in the manufacturing districts, and how seriously manufacture had been interfered with following the crisis, the line's record for the last half-year of 1908 is not to be looked upon as unsatisfactory.

That the management was able to effect a saving of nearly \$1,450,000 in working expenses went far to offset the falling-off of \$1,900,000 in gross earnings during the six months. Such retrenchment, without seriously affecting efficiency, could not have been achieved by a road less thoroughly built and equipped. Avoidance of the "cheap and nasty" in railroad building, as in most else, proves a real economy in the long run.

Joint Stock Company Franchise.

The clause in the Montreal bill giving votes to Joint Stock Companies, has been thrown out by the Legislative Assembly without a division. The matter is of little consequence in the form presented. As a matter of principle it seems right that a company should have a voice in the government of a country to which it pays taxes. But in practice the privilege would amount to little, unless the voting power were proportioned to the size of the company. For instance, the Street Railway Company, the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company, the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific could be outvoted by any five petty traders who had got themselves incorporated with the most insignificant capital.