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Editorial Notes.

The City Commissioner is now inspecting the factories in Toronto, in order to see what sanitary arrangements are provided for the employees. This is of course quite within municipal powers to do; and between the Dominion Government and the municipalities something is likely to be done in the matter before long.

The Halifax *Chronicle* says that the steamship *Tancarville*, of the new Brazilian line, having been detained for repairs, was announced to sail on Thursday, the 23rd inst., on arrival of the western mails. In consequence, the sailing of the *Comte d'Eu*, Captain Laperdrix, will be postponed until Saturday, the 15th April. A third steamer, with passenger accommodation, will leave Rio de Janeiro in April, for Halifax and Montreal.

It may be asked upon what ground can we, who have established protection in Canada, complain of Spain's discrimination against foreign vessels visiting Porto Rico. The answer is, that the productions of that tropical island are so unlike those of this northern country that there is really no competition between the two; they are natural customers to each other. But it is competition in the carrying trade that is in question, it appears. In such a case the fair thing would be reciprocity as to shipping laws, the same on both sides.

A bill to make the New York State canals free has passed the House at Albany, and it is expected will pass the State Senate too by a considerable majority. After that it has still to be ratified by the direct vote of the people, at the next State election; and it will in all probability be carried, if Vanderbilt be not powerful enough to prevent. The policy of free canals in the State has been defeated several times already, or nipped in the bud, by the Vanderbilt influence at Albany; but this time, it is thought, the railway king will not be able wholly to control the action of a legislature representing more than five millions of people.

Canada's experience of bankrupt law has been so unsatisfactory that any member proposing in the House of Commons to revive the thing again might almost expect to be mobbed. Our American neighbours, however, after some years doing without any national bankrupt law, only those made by particular states and confined to their respective limits being in force, are now reconsidering the subject, and the Senate Judiciary Committee has reported a measure which it is said puts the matter largely in the hands of the United States Courts. The compensation of officials as far as possible by salaries instead of fees is a feature of the bill, and the enlargement of discretionary power with the judges is another, with ample facilities allowed for compromise between debtors and creditors, when they find it possible to agree amongst themselves.

The movement for the establishment of "The Planters' Bank of Canada," to facilitate and develop trade between Jamaica and the Dominion, is an important one, and we are glad to learn that it is likely to lead to substantial results, too. Mr. Richard Truax, from Jamaica, has been in Canada the last two months working the thing up, and has received the co-operation of business men in Toronto, Montreal, St. John, Halifax, Ottawa, and other places. The capital of the bank has been placed at \$2,500,000, and the act incorporating it is already passed by the House. This is a move in the right direction. We cannot have too much "free trade" with Jamaica and other tropical countries, whose products are so greatly different from our own. Canada and Jamaica are naturally customers to each other, and not competitors. This distinction is fundamental; it lies at the very bottom of the true theory and practice of international trade.

The *United States Economist* says that the growth of the manufacture of pig iron in the Southern iron and coal regions, within the past five years, has been much greater than casual observers can be aware of. The popular idea naturally associates the development of this industry and the increase of furnace production with the erection of new plant, in a measure an erroneous method of reasoning. In the first place, about half the modern stacks in the South went out of blast in the hard times from 1874 to 1878. These heretofore idle plants are all now not merely active, but so remodelled in many instances, and so managed, as to about double their former capacity. Several new stacks have been built in the meantime, and more are projected. The furnace prospects look fairly bright for the future, the best judges predicting an exceptionally heavy demand, when advanced spring shall make track-laying and renewing feasible, thus stimulating demand for forge iron.

The Prince Edward county enterprise of a railway back to the iron mines in Madoc and surrounding district, in connection with furnaces at the lake front, is being pushed forward. The *Kingston News* says that Mr. Ritchie, an American, who is largely interested in the steel rail business, has made a proposal on behalf of Pittsburg and Cleveland capitalists to erect a steel rail mill at Weller's Bay, which can be supplied with ore from these mines, of a kind exactly suited for making Bessemer steel, the supply of ore being unlimited. This seems