

to show that it would require a like reduction every year for 400 years to get down to the average tariff of 1878. He asserted that the English artisan pays in taxes only a twentieth part of what the Canadian artisan pays on everything he requires, except anthracite coal and tea. He puts the total amount paid under the tariff at \$60,000,000 a year, one-half of which only goes into the treasury and the other half into private pockets. Having made this statement, it is difficult to see how it can be reconciled with the statement that "manufacturers prospered more up to 1878, and in a far more substantial way, than they have since."

What may be called trial by a coalition of detective and newspaper has of late become unpleasantly familiar in Canada. Trial by detective has, in the case of Clara Ford, received its death blow. The detectives get hold of a young woman, without warrant or other legal authority, and accuse her of murder. For seven hours they keep her on the rack of questioning, till, fairly worn out, she concocts a confession to get rid of her tormentors. She is brought to trial for the alleged crime; the confession is produced and admitted, subject to a reserved case; the jury in forty-eight minutes after retiring bring in a verdict of not guilty. The detectives, we are told, are officers of the court; true, but that fact does not justify them in plying an accused person with questions in advance of the regular trial, and in the absence of the court and of counsel, which neither prosecuting counsel nor judge could put to her. To subject her to such an inquisition is to graft the French system upon the English, a system utterly repugnant to the spirit of British jurisprudence. The practice had just reached its most dangerous point. The Chancellor, whose great abilities all will acknowledge, was in doubt whether it ought to be continued, but with a leaning in favor of it. The Ford case was his first murder trial; he is innocent of the ways of detectives, who sometimes do not scruple to forge the missing link of the chain, which as a whole becomes strong enough to take away the liberty or the life of a fellow creature. The jury in the case of Clara Ford would not sanction a reserved case; they settled the matter for themselves. If in future detectives overdo their part, there can be no doubt that we shall have to face the danger that juries will refuse to aid them by convictions. Trial by newspaper still holds its malignant sway. During this trial the accused was often spoken of as the murderer of Frank Westwood. If the administration of justice is not to become a bye-word among us, means of putting an end to this practice must be found.

A new board has been elected by the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway Co., and Sir Charles Rivers-Wilson is made president, for which he is to get £4,000 a year. On the ground that a direct relation between salaries and efficiency exists, how is the Grand Trunk to get service equal to that presumably given by Sir William Van Horne to the Canadian Pacific? Something was said at the meeting about the desirability of keeping the capital account in England and the working expenses account in Canada. It must all along have been recognized that financial accountability is due to England, where the bulk of the capital is held. But beyond this, there is the question, can the authority necessary for the efficient working of the road be advantageously centered three or four thousand miles from the scene of nearest operations? Hints were let drop of hopes that the price of the stock would rise. The fact that much of the stock is hopelessly dead ought to be recognized. Unless this be understood, what will reorganization amount to? A change of figures; and if the stock be forced up a change of victims. What else will be the outcome re-

mains to be seen. It is to be hoped that the new management will see that there was something else to be done besides reorganizing the board, by getting the proxies to flow in a new channel. Till full opportunity has been given for the new board to work out the salvation of the concern, opinions as to the outcome may fairly be held in suspense. There is a consensus of opinion that the new board will do something effective, and if they fail to meet that expectation, great will be the disappointment.

Last November, Mr. Sutherland approached the Dominion Government for a loan of \$2,500,000 to the Hudson Bay Railway Company. At the same time he admitted that the claims of judgment creditors amounted to \$450,000. The natural reply would have been that a company in that condition, with no revenue and unable to work the forty miles built, had better go into liquidation, and that if there was to be any large advance made, the Government must have a more stable guarantee for a return of the loan than a bankrupt company could offer. A contract for the construction of 250 miles of road was produced. On the 5th March, an order-in-council was made, granting a loan of \$2,500,000; the land grant to be held by the Government, besides a first lien on the road. The company undertakes to find the means of repayment by a sale of bonds within two years. But the bonds might not be saleable; a first lien looks well, but when obtained from the Grand Trunk it soon came to amount to nothing by being deferred. Before the end of April, Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, the contractors, refused to proceed with the construction, and a new contract was made with Donald Grant, of Fairbault, Tim. Foley, of St. Paul, and James Isbester, of Ottawa. Three days later, Mr. Haggart, Minister of Railways, makes the statement that "the Government cannot recognize these contractors." Mr. Sutherland says this means that the Government does not recognize any contractors, its business being with the company. It is doubtful whether this be the true explanation, for Mr. Foster stated in the House, on Tuesday, that the old contract still subsists.

THE LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

It is the common impression among the taxpayers of Toronto that the local improvement system, which, under abuse, has developed such an enormous capacity for mischief, is a new thing, the outcome of legislation not more than a dozen years old. This is an entirely erroneous impression. Away back in the early fifties the principle that the real estate immediately benefited by any improvement should bear the cost, or part of it, was recognized by law. In 1859 there were introduced into the Municipal Acts of the then Province of Canada, local improvement clauses very closely resembling those now in force. It was provided that on the petition of two-thirds of the property owners representing one-half in value of the property benefited, a city council might assess the cost of any sewer, street opening, extension, grading, paving, macadamizing, etc., on the property benefited, and the assessment might be made either according to the foot front or on the value of the land, or on the value of the land and buildings.

While the law remained in that form a fair number of local improvement works, principally sewers, were executed in Toronto. But the experience of twenty years showed that there was not sufficient inducement to encourage property owners to proceed with the development of their land. The ward system was in full swing. By dint of industrious log rolling, many works that ought to have been paid for by the property benefited were executed at the