

MR WYLDE'S MISSION TO THE WEST INDIES.

The Dominion Government, in its efforts to promote the trade relations of Canada with other countries, has adopted the wise plan of sending special agents to different foreign countries to collect statistics, and by direct inquiries on the spot, find out the prospects of opening up or developing profitable channels of commerce. The information thus derived should prove invaluable to our merchants and shippers, as it furnishes the most authentic data, and provides them with a safe guide in the event of their wishing to embark in new ventures. Mr John F. Wylde's mission to the West Indies was of special importance to Nova Scotia, as this Province, above all others, is interested in securing improved trade relations with those islands. The selection of Mr. Wylde as commercial agent, was a wise one. He was a Halifaxian, thoroughly posted in the fish business, and with the trade requirements of our port; and he was thus enabled to meet the West India merchants, and discuss all matters of mutual interest with a thorough knowledge of his subject. But the able manner in which he has performed his duties is the best proof of his ability, and we only regret that the authorities had not seen fit to enlarge his field of action, so as to embrace Central and South American countries which should prove profitable markets for our fish and manufactured goods. His report is now before us, and from it we learn that he has visited the islands of Cuba, Porto Rico, and Jamaica, and is fully persuaded, from the facts which were brought to his attention, and which he furnishes in detail, that a line of steamships between Halifax and these Islands is necessary, if we wish to obtain or hold direct trade. Acting on his report, the Government has advertised for tenders for a line of steamships, and before many months have passed away, direct steam communication will have been established, and our merchants will then be in a position to compete with the United States for a trade that our own want of foresight has allowed them to monopolize. To quote from Mr. Wylde—“By a judicious placing of lines of steamers from the United States to all parts of the West Indies, employing about 40,000 tons of steamship tonnage from the Port of New York alone, the Americans have succeeded in building up a vast trade, while Canada is without a single steamer engaged in direct communication with the West Indies.” And yet we have merchants in this Province who were foolish enough, only a year ago, to sign a petition to the Imperial Government, praying that the subsidy to the only line of steamers then running to the West Indies from Halifax, might be withdrawn. How well they succeeded is attested by the steamers that have since lain idle in the Cunard docks, by thousands of dollars that have been lost to this port, by scores of hands that have been thrown out of employment, and by seeing the business that they hoped to capture transferred to American steamers sailing from New York. They actually petitioned to have a line that was subsidized by the Imperial Government discontinued; and now, in order to recover their old trade, the Dominion has to subsidize a steamship line, and the country is thus saddled with largely increased expense. Truly, these petitioners must be proud of their work.

That sailing vessels must give way to steamers, is a hard conclusion to arrive at, in a country so interested in vessels as this; but it is a fact, and the sooner we acknowledge it, and act accordingly, the better. Travellers for New York firms now pay regular visits to the West Indies, and take orders for thousands of dollars worth of fish, to be delivered by steamer in such lots and at such times as the merchants may desire. Formerly a few leading merchants in each island had almost a monopoly of trade. They could afford to purchase whole cargoes, and the smaller merchants had to buy from them, and often had to take quantities of fish that they did not want, in order to secure what they did. These monopolists find their business almost ruined by the regular introduction by steamers of small quantities of fish, and are therefore anxious to see the old order of things restored, and steamers driven from the field.

It is probably from this source that the opposition in Jamaica to the granting of a subsidy to a Canadian and West Indian steamship line originates. This slight opposition was all that Mr. Wylde had to contend with, as in all the Islands visited he was cordially received and furnished with statistics, proving that an immense trade between the Islands and Canada might be developed, if steam communication were once established. The outlook is most encouraging, the steamship line will soon be running, and if our merchants will only take hold of the matter, as they should, a full share of the lost West India trade may be restored to Halifax.

THE TEMPER OF THE FRENCH.

If there is one nation which is, more than any other, swayed by sentiment, that nation is France. The prominence of the word “*esprit*” in the French language is as significant as the absence of a word for “home.” We hear M. DeFreycinet just now saying that the safety of France depends on the “*esprit national*” and the “*esprit militaire*.” What he thus designates may be patriotism, for Frenchmen are certainly patriotic; but, viewed in the light of recent newspaper utterances, it is decidedly tinged with jingoism. The fact of the matter is, that the French people are growing restless again. The disgraceful whipping administered by Germany naturally seemed an ignominious thing to be endured by a nation which fights more than any other for glory. Like a beaten schoolboy of a certain disposition, France must whip somebody in her turn, and will not be satisfied until she has done so. The difficulty is to find a nation with which she can quarrel, and without running too great a risk. Italy, strengthened by powerful allies, is beyond her reach. Germany she dare not attack.

The *Spectator* suggests that the periodical restlessness of the French is due to the eagerness to make their influence felt—a sure sign of conscious weakness. No doubt this cause operates largely, for had such a thing as war been unknown in Europe, the influence of France would have been

comparatively small. She must make some physical exertion now and then in order to attract attention.

Just what course this pent-up vexation (*esprit militaire*) or this desire for greater influence (*esprit national*) will lead France to follow, it seems idle to conjecture. The Chinese and the Hovas have already been tried without success; but a European victim is necessary. England, it would be a very acceptable sacrifice. England has rather crowded France out of her place of influence in Egypt. True, England bore the expenditure of much blood and money in her efforts to restore Egyptian affairs to order; still, there is enough in her dealings there to arouse either of the *esprits* mentioned by M. DeFreycinet. We need scarcely expect France to engage in such a struggle single-handed. Her ports are too easy of access by the British navy, which, notwithstanding newly revealed flaws, is strong enough to be an object of terror. But England has an enemy, supposed to be real, in Russia. Hence the recent coquetting between France and Russia. A grotesque union that would be, too—an attempt to harmonize the scream of the republican eagle with the growl of the despotic bear. But interests makes strange alliances.

M. DeFreycinet said the other day that war is inevitable; and the tone of some of the leading French papers shows that the minister's opinion accords with public sentiment. There are no very decided symptoms of an outbreak; but, as the *Spectator* says—“there is ample reason in the temper of France for keeping our powder dry.”

THE BRIDGE AT QUEBEC.

Now that a determined effort is to be made to induce the Government to assist in the building of the bridge crossing the St. Lawrence at Quebec by a guarantee upon the bonds of the company which has undertaken the work of construction, representatives of Halifax in the Dominion Parliament should further the project by giving it their unqualified and earnest support.

If any one questions the advantages that Halifax would derive from securing connection *via* the Intercolonial with the C. P. Railway, as well as with the Grand Trunk Line, he has only to consult Halifax shippers and merchants doing business with the Upper Provinces, and they will very speedily convince him that this double connection, which Sir Charles Tupper years ago pointed out, would be of incalculable benefit to this city, is absolutely necessary, if Halifax is to become the great Winter Port of the Dominion. Halifax and Quebec should unite in the effort to secure the guarantee of the company's bonds; for until the bridge is built, the Intercolonial Railway, as originally projected, must remain an unfinished work. The Imperial guarantee was given, not for a road from Halifax to Chaudiere Junction, nor yet for a road from Halifax to Point Levi. Halifax and Quebec were named as the terminal points; and as the *Quebec Chronicle* very justly remarks—“The City of Halifax would not have been satisfied, had the Intercolonial Railway been stopped at tide water, at Bedford Basin, or at Dartmouth.” Messrs. Kenny and Jones can, by giving the bridge company their active support, do much to prevent the construction of this great work being regarded as a local matter, in which Quebec, and Quebec alone, is interested. With these gentlemen advocating its construction, both the supporters and opponents of the Government would come to regard it in its true light as a work of national importance; and we therefore trust that they will spare no pains in presenting such a case to the Government and Parliament, as will prove clearly the advantages of the bridge to the trade of Halifax and to the justice of aiding its construction by guaranteeing the bonds of the company.

THE MUTUAL PLAN.

It is announced that Messrs. Proctor & Gamble, the large soap manufacturers of Cincinnati, have made an elaborate proposition for allowing their employees to share in the profits of the firm. The plan is to appoint three trustees, two book-keepers, and a superintendent in the firm's employ, who shall, twice a year, ascertain the amount of profits during the preceding six months, allowing as expenses 6 per cent interest on the capital employed, and reasonable salaries to members of the firm devoting their time to its interests, and then divide these profits between the firm and employees in proportion to the capital and the wages earned. The employees have accepted the proposition with thanks, and resolved to allow no outside influence to disturb the relations between them and their employers.

In the above plan we believe will be found the only true remedy for the labor troubles which are constantly cropping up, and which is justly regarded as one of the greatest questions which now require to be solved. The mutual plan is by no means unknown in Nova Scotia. We know at least one large wholesale firm in this city, which, in addition to paying its employees liberal salaries, also allows them a percentage of the profits of the business; and from what we know of the working of the system in this instance, we are led to the conclusion that its more general adoption by wholesale manufacturers and employers would have a most wholesome tendency. Employees who are participating in the profits would certainly be more likely to be industrious and economical in the use of time and material than would those who merely received a salary or wage for their services. Moreover, the relations of the employer and employee would, under the mutual plan, be much more satisfactory than they ever can be under a system which tends to breed distrust and discontent. Our working classes now enjoy all the advantages of free education. Let them but have an opportunity to share with capital in the profits of their skill and labor, and we shall hear the last of lockouts, strikes, and boycotts, to which are attributable much of the ill-feeling, dissatisfaction and discontent, which exists in the present day.