

THE PUREST NONSENSE.

IT is most absurd to imagine that Canada would be in any respect benefitted by annexation to the United States, or by even the less close connection implied by a commercial Zollverein. The only possible way in which Canada could obtain advantage from the markets of the United States is precisely the way which the Government of that country will take good care not to offer to us. If we could retain our present tariff and general scale of taxation, and still have free access to the markets of say forty millions of consumers, we could compete—aye, and successfully compete—with their heavily taxed manufacturers. This they know full well; and the wealthy interests involved have quite political power enough to prevent any general sweeping away of custom houses between us and our neighbours, unless we agree to leave customs and internal taxes on a scale similar to theirs. The competition under present circumstances would, from their point of view, be altogether an unequal one, and they are not the people to make a bargain so apparently hostile to their own interests. It might be possible to negotiate a treaty admitting into the States such of our products as are absolutely required, and on which there can be no question of doubt that the consumers pay the duty that goes into the U. S. Treasury.

For instance, our lumber will find a market in the United States at whatever price our lumbermen choose to ask. That is to say, if only a certain amount of lumber were got out this winter, and the owners of it decided—and remained firm to their decision—that they would not sell except for a particular price there is no doubt the price in the United States would be governed by the price established here, and would be sufficient to pay duty, and a profit besides, to the dealer. Of course, if a surplus were got out and thrown on the market by weak holders, there might be a heavy decline, and, for the moment, prices seem to be regulated by the will of the consumers; but this would not last long. The price having fallen to an unprofitable point, our lumbermen would get out less, some of them, perhaps, not be in a position to get out nearly the usual quantity; and the following season, the supply being short, or, at all events, not in excess of the demand, prices would advance to the point at which there would be profit to all concerned. So that, on the average, it is evident that the consumer in the United States must pay the duty on our lumber, collected by his Government.

With regard to another article of large export from Canada to the United States, namely, butter, it will be seen, on due consideration, that the duty is paid not by our farmers, but by the people of Boston, New York, or elsewhere, who are in the habit of spreading it on their bread as "Vermont Dairy." It will be found by observation that, generally speaking—there are exceptional years, but on an average of seasons—the price of butter, both here and in the United States, is regulated by the price in the English markets. Consequently, as we will not ship to the United States if we can dispose of our butter more profitably in England, American buyers must give us our price or go without. And paying us our price, they must also pay the duty levied on it when it enters the United States. No sane Canadian would send butter to New York or Boston unless he felt certain of being able to realize not merely the same price he could get in Canada, but that price *plus* duty, freight, commission, and a margin for extra profit. And so we might go on through a list of the articles we now export to the United States.

The truth of this doctrine of political economy is being slowly recognized by our neighbours; and it is possible that just as soon as they can afford to do with smaller revenues than they now find it necessary to raise, they will be willing to enter into a commercial treaty on the basis of the old treaty, but on no more favorable terms to us.

With annexation, of course there would be freedom of trade; but, after a year or two, what would that be worth? There would probably be an advance in our markets, and the advance might be permanent; but the profit would be only on stock on hand at the time of making the change. Prices of everything advancing, it would immediately begin to be more costly to carry on business of any kind whatever. Living would be dearer, labour would cost more, and we should work at a disadvantage as compared with our present position. If we enter the United States, we will not be admitted on exceptional terms. We will have to help pay the war debt, and we will find

it a heavy burden, even our share of it, which would be about treble our present public debt. We would find that all our visions of prosperity to be obtained under the stars and stripes were simply delusions, and however the United States might gain in territory, wealth and dignity, that we had sold ourselves exceedingly cheaply.

And it must not be overlooked that, politically, we should be still greater losers by giving ourselves over to democracy. There will be corruption to some extent wherever there is party government; but there is no country where there is more of it than in the United States; and official dishonesty is so common as hardly to call for remark from those who have anything to do with politics. We do not mean to assert that a democratic form of government is necessarily accompanied by corruption, but we do say that the particular form of it which exists in the United States is undoubtedly marked by the most unblushing political profligacy, and it will be a sorry day for our Dominion when anything tempts us to ask for annexation, no matter how promising that temptation may appear.

ABOUT OUR FISHERIES.

THE Minister of Marine and Fisheries, the Hon. Mr. Mitchell, has recently issued his annual report of the operations of his Department for 1868. The report contains a good deal of matter relating to the organization of the Department, not of much interest to the general public. The reports of the Inspectors of Fisheries for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the Province of Quebec, however, contain much valuable information in regard to our fisheries in their respective districts, as also the remarks of Mr. Samuel Wilmot, of Newcastle, Ontario, whose breeding establishment is now under Government control, and well deserves to be sustained.

Mr. Wilmot points out very clearly the causes which have led to so many of our Canadian streams becoming denuded of fish, the greatest injury being done by means of nets, and the taking of fish during the spawning season. These evils he speaks out very strongly against, and there can be no doubt that the Government are now fully alive to the importance of carrying out the law in this respect, and are determined to prosecute all those who violate it if they can be detected. Mr. Wilmot mentions another way in which great havoc is made among that fine fish, the trout. That is, by persons cutting holes in the ice in winter and catching them. Not only should these fish not be taken throughout the winter months, but during that time they are more voracious than at other seasons, and will eagerly take any kind of bait. This winter fishing is most destructive upon trout, and in many parts of Ontario, where the trout is the only really good fish to be found in the streams, the community ought to aid the Government in punishing those who break the fishery laws in any particular.

We are glad to observe, from the report of Mr. W. H. Venning, the inspector for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, that the means taken by Government to protect the fish in those Provinces are proving successful. It is claimed by the inspector that the number of fish in the waters under his supervision is now increasing, whereas a few years ago, when little or no attention was paid to the matter, the streams were fast becoming depopulated. In this view he is sustained by Mr. Roger, who gives his experience whilst inspecting the principal streams of Nova Scotia. This gentleman complains bitterly of the wanton way in which fish have been destroyed in that Province, but considers that the present machinery in force to put down "the wicked slaughter of fish in the spawning season by poachers, in the use of traps, spears and nets," will succeed in re-stocking the Nova Scotia streams in five years. In the reports of these two officers, the grievances of our eastern fishermen in regard to American poachers, could hardly escape mention, and it must be admitted that they make out a pretty good case for some action being taken by our Government to prevent the illegal encroachments of American fishermen upon our fishing grounds. It is certainly rather hard for Canadian fishermen to see themselves almost elbowed off their own fishing stations by foreigners who have no right there, whilst the fish they catch are shut out from the American market, except on payment of heavy duties. This state of things requires a remedy, and our Government had better see to it promptly, or the sturdy fishermen of the Maritime Provinces may lose respect for

"powers that be," which are either unwilling or unable to protect them in the possession of their acknowledged rights.

The result of the fisheries of Quebec during last year, is well reported by Mr. Alfred Blais, the overseer. The year was, upon the whole, not a very favourable one, the number of seals and mackerel taken being less than in 1867. The number of seals captured in 1868 is set down at only 848, whilst in the previous season 10,410 were killed. The overseer says "never before had this fishing proved such a failure." The cause given to account for this, was the prevalence of strong north-westerly winds which constantly blew in March and April, driving the seals out of the Gulf. The mackerel taken only amounted to 980 bris against 2,974 in 1867. The herring fishery at the Magdalen Islands, however, was better than usual—the catch being double that of the previous season. The report gives the returns as follows:—

QUANTITY OF HERBING TAKEN.

	Barrels.
In 1867, by the inhabitants.....	8,810
In 1867, by strangers.....	11,820
Total.....	15,680
In 1868, by the inhabitants.....	9,065
In 1868, by strangers.....	29,980
Total.....	39,015

Summing up the result of the whole year's operations of the Quebec fisheries, the value of the yield for 1868 is placed at \$651,286, whilst in 1867 it was \$1,070,622—a falling off of no less than \$419,336. The report of Mr. Blais is quite interesting, and seems to indicate that he takes great interest in the success of the fisheries of Quebec, and, consequently, in the prosperity of the hardy men and their families who follow that hazardous calling.

Among a great deal of other useful information contained in this blue book, the Hon. Mr. Mitchell promises to bring a new and important measure before Parliament next session. It will relate to the shipping of seamen and apprentices in Canada. It is proposed to assimilate the laws upon this subject, and to provide for the remuneration of shipping masters by fees; the bill will also provide for the proper examination of persons as masters and mates, and the granting of certificates of competency. Up to a recent period the British Government would not consent to recognize any such certificates granted by our Government, and even the master of his own vessel could not proceed to sea from Great Britain without undergoing examination there. When Messrs. Cartier and McDougall were in England, the Minister of Marine got them to bring this matter before the President of the Board of Trade, and the British Government have now agreed to pass a measure through the House of Commons to recognize Canadian certificates in future. Mr. Mitchell's bill will provide that this examination of masters and mates shall hereafter take place in Canada, and be of such a character as the circumstances require.

THE JUNTA AND THE HORNET.

OUR American cousins have something like an *Alabama* case on hand just now. The revolutionists in New York, known as the Cuban Junta, have, for some months, been plotting how they could get a privateer afloat to aid the Cuban insurgents by preying upon Spanish commerce. For this purpose they obtained possession of a vessel known as the *Hornet*, a craft not of large size, but one which, when well equipped, might have been a thorn in the side of Spain. This vessel sailed from Philadelphia a few weeks ago, and was shortly afterwards heard of at Halifax, where she was detained by the authorities on information that something was wrong. After an examination, however, the vessel was released, no proof of anything wrong being found upon her. This visit to the capital of Nova Scotia seems to have been part of the plan of the Cuban Junta, for, shortly after leaving Halifax, the *Hornet* was met upon "the high seas" by two other vessels,—one from the same city as herself, having started before her, and the other vessel it is not said where. From the one vessel the *Hornet* shipped a number of formidable-looking seamen, and from the other a complete supply of arms and ammunition. As soon as this was satisfactorily accomplished, a new and strange flag was soon run up to the breeze, which proved, on inspection, to be that of the Cuban insurgents. Here was an *Alabama* all rigged, afloat, and ready for action,—one, too, which had come from an American