

France cannot be said to be lucky in her schemes of colonization. The war with China has been a costly business, the outlay on which will not readily be got back. And now his sable majesty King of Dahomey, in West Africa, has come down on some villages under French protection, and is reported to have captured a thousand French subjects, whom he designs to devote to cannibalism. Of course this King of Dahomey must be made to suffer for his temerity; but the infliction of punishment will involve a heavy sacrifice in money. M. De Freycinet, with whom it was a maxim that "the future belongs to the nations which seek expansion abroad," led the nation into a heavy expenditure in connection with colonization schemes, whatever else may be the result.

In the failure of the negotiations between France and Spain for a new commercial treaty Canada has, on her part, nothing to regret. The principal point, at the commencement of the negotiations, was the alteration of the British wine duties so as to allow the admission of the wines of Spain, which are of extra strength, at the same rate as lighter wines. England yielded the point and a declaration to that effect, binding on both countries, was drawn up Dec. 21, 1884, the equivalent she was to receive being the treatment accorded to the most favored nation. But, in March last, the Spanish government imported a new element into the discussion, the alleged smuggling at Gibraltar. Looking to the attempted violation of the agreement of December, Earl Granville refused to admit the new element into the negotiations, the failure of which means a double duty on Spanish wines, and is even more hurtful to Spain than to England. As the Spanish draft of treaty was formed with the intention of excluding the British colonies from its benefits, Canada will lose nothing by the result of the negotiations. We cannot say what chance Canada has of securing a treaty embracing the trade of the West India colonies of Spain, but we suspect she has very little.

At the opening of the trial of Riel, objection was made to the jurisdiction of the court, but was overruled. A month's delay was asked for and liberty to bring in Gabriel Dumont and another outlaw and fugitive, as a witness. The latter demand was out of the question. A week's delay was granted, and the Crown agreed to join in defraying the expense of the witnesses. The license of the bar was shown in a new direction, Mr. Greenshields making an unusual attack on the counsel for the Crown. It is better that the license of the bar, which embodies the spirit of Jeffreys, should be unchained against opposing counsel than against defenceless witnesses. It is no unusual thing for counsel to try to defeat the ends of justice by confusing a witness. No man at the bar could so fittingly administer the rebuke which Mr. Greenshields called down on himself, as Mr. Christopher Robinson, and by a proceeding which, to say the least, does the assailant no credit.

Hereafter the commerce of Canada will be represented by a trade section and committee in connection with the London (Eng.) Chamber of Commerce, a meeting to form which was held on the 24th of June. The London Chamber of Commerce has been but recently established, and it has already formed a network of representative bodies of which it is the centre. Each of the great trades is represented by a separate organization, in connection with the Chamber, and now sections representing trading interests in the colonies have begun to be formed. Already there are West African, South African, Australian and Canadian sections. An East Indian section will probably soon be added. The Chamber of Commerce, before this was done, became convinced of the desirability, in some way, of drawing the colonies and the mother country into closer communion and of rivetting the existing bonds. This movement has apparently some reference to the India and Colonial Exhibition which is to take place at Kensington next year, and of which a particular account will be found elsewhere. For Canada, there are the practical questions of immigration and postal reform. Mr. Tritton, chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce, said that the question of tariff would come under consideration; but we suspect that the Chamber will not be able to do much, if anything, with it.

The case of the striking bricklayers' laborers in this city has gone to arbitration; and pending a decision, the arbitrators wish the men to go back to work. The places of the striking men could easily have been supplied, but the bricklayers, who were not in the quarrel, would not receive material from non-union men. The result was that building was brought almost to a stand-still. Some of the striking men have been sent out of the city, and those who remain are paying for their obstinacy in shortened supplies. The masters show no signs of yielding directly to the demands of the laborers and the dictation of the bricklayers. The main loss of the suspension of work will fall on the workmen.

THE FREE NAVIGATION LEAGUE.

When the deputation from Montreal waited on the government to ask the removal of the tolls from the canals, its failure to make out a case was painfully conspicuous. Mr. Pope pointed out that the real difficulty lay in the fact that the forwarders charged excessive rates, so excessive that they contrived to get more for carrying goods from Kingston to Montreal, than is paid for their carriage on the whole length of the Erie canal. To this there was no answer, and so far as we have seen, no answer has come yet. It is quite useless to deal in vague general statements. The course which the government is asked to take it would, if it yielded to the wishes of the League, be obliged to defend. But we have seen no arguments advanced by those gentlemen by which a grave act of state policy, which would have the effect of throwing on the public the burthen of

the cost and maintenance of the canals, could be defended.

Subsequent meetings of the League have been held; but still there is little but vague talk which will not bear criticism. It is useless and unfair to compare our water-route with the Erie canal; the comparison is of things totally dissimilar; the comparison of a great river with a few short canals to overcome the rapids, with a small artificial canal, hundreds of miles in length. The facility for conveying freight on our route is so much greater than that on the Erie as to make any comparison out of the question. The advantages on our side are not more than balanced by the small tolls charged; the free Erie really competes at a disadvantage, but it makes up in the enterprise of those engaged in the carrying business, for what it lacks in facilities of conveyance.

Canada has been induced to expend many millions on her canals, when they were already more than sufficient for her own trade, in the hope of securing a direct return for the expenditure, in the form of tolls on foreign produce. And now members of the Free Navigation League tell us that it is "absurd to spend millions on the canals and then tax the goods passing through them." But a toll is not a tax, and if the persons using the canals and enjoying the benefit of them do not pay for that benefit, the general public must do so. And the general public is not yet convinced of the equity of one man enjoying a thing and another paying for it.

Another leaguer pointed out that "if there were no outward freights there would be no inward freights." The question is not of no freights one way or the other; some freights there will be where there are domestic producers and consumers. What we have pointed out, and what the League cannot deny, is, that the exports bear a fixed proportion to the imports, and that beyond that proportion you cannot, in the presence of existing competition, increase the exports. Vessels which bring goods to American ports, will take back return cargoes thence, and will not leave American ports, once they have arrived there, and go to Montreal for return cargoes, nor will they come out in ballast, if they can get cargoes to any port, for the purpose of taking back produce.

We should be sorry to take a local, or restricted view of this question, and we believe we are quite incapable of doing so. But when we hear that the whole country, and especially the North-West, is interested in the abolition of canal tolls, we find it impossible to co-incide in this opinion. The question is one of throwing open our canals, free of toll to American trade which competes with our own in the British markets; if we make that competition easy for Americans we must do so to our own disadvantage; we must in fact make them a present of the tolls, and for what purpose? That we may get the profits of the forwarding trade. But the forwarding trade can show no right to be bolstered up at the direct cost of the producer and the country at large. There is no country in the world, we venture to say, which, if