

## IMPORTANT RUMOURS.

WE learn from a private source in the United States, that an important event may possibly take place there before many weeks. It is nothing less than the resumption of specie payments? We have noticed of late that several Republican papers, of undoubted influence, have been discussing this vitally important question, but we had no idea there was any real intention on the part of the Government to grapple with it. But our informant says the Republican party feel the necessity of endeavouring to put an end to the gambling in gold and bonds going on at present, to the grave injury of the legitimate business of the country, and that the leaders of that party are now earnestly considering themselves, as well as feeling the public pulse, when they shall put an end to the present system. Our informant states that one of two courses has been already decided upon—either to adopt specie payments before spring, or defer it till after the next presidential election. Leading Republicans in the various States have been already consulted, and it is said that a very considerable number favour immediate resumption, believing that a crisis of some sort is inevitable, and that the ultimate advantage will be so evident before General Grant's term of office expires, that the Republican party will gain rather than lose in public estimation by the bold move. It is expected a decision will not be long delayed. The immediate effect of resuming specie payments in the United States, it would be impossible to foretell. The low price of gold at present, however, and the fact that the banks of New York have over \$20,000,000 in specie in their vaults, would render the operation less dangerous now than some months ago. It would at first be very likely to produce widespread financial disaster, but its ultimate fruits would be beneficial. We hope these rumours are correct, and that General Grant and his party will have the courage to decide for a return to the gold basis, if not immediately, as soon as it can be done with safety and propriety.

## ONTARIO PRISONS AND PRISONERS.

WE have read with some attention the report of Mr. Langmuir, Inspector of Prisons for the Province of Ontario, which has recently been circulated. The statistics with regard to the Prisons of the Province are worthy of close attention, for there is certainly room, as the Inspector clearly points out, to improve the character of some of the Gaols, and, in particular, to render less burdensome the expense of maintaining our Prison population.

For the year ending the 30th September, 1869, the total number of persons confined in our Common Gaols was 5,655. Of these, 3,755 were committed for the first time, the remainder having been committed twice, thrice, and even oftener. No less than 376 of the commitments were persons under 16 years of age, of whom 82 were girls; and of those over 16 years, 3,599 were men and 1,680 women. With regard to Nationalities, the returns are as follows:—Canada 2,146; Ireland, 1,962; England, 750; Scotland, 393; United States, 361; and other countries, 96. By far the largest number of the prisoners were unmarried—a fact from which those who like to theorize on such topics might draw many curious inferences. It would, *prima facie*, go to indicate that wedded life is, to some extent at least, a protection against crime, and that Bachelors are more likely than Benedicts to fall into the hands of the officers of justice. Leaving this point to those who take more interest than we do in such investigations, we find from Mr. Langmuir's statistics, that of the prisoners confined in Gaol last year, 3,770 were unmarried and only 1,885 married. The religious beliefs of the prisoners are set down as follows: Roman Catholics, 2,146; Church of England, 1,958; Presbyterians, 631; Methodists, 635; and other denominations, 235. It is melancholy to think that no less than 1,697 could neither read nor write, and that 3,443 were intemperate—in all probability, drunkards. Of the 2,212 set down as temperate, of many of them it is doubtless true, that but for intoxicating liquors they would not have seen the inside of a prison at all.

Mr. Langmuir speaks out strongly against allowing prisoners to idle away their time whilst in Gaol. He shows that it took \$100,739 to maintain them for the past twelve months, only the paltry sum of \$725 having been obtained from their labour! Only three Gaols realized anything, and of these Toronto received \$682, whilst the institution cost over \$15,000 to maintain it! Mr. Langmuir very sensibly points out

the folly of continuing such a system, and strongly urges the erection of at least one Central Prison, to which prisoners could be sent from the County Gaols and set to work. The Detroit House of Correction is cited as evidence of the good results which would flow from such an institution. That prison was started in 1862, the manufacture of chairs begun, and from that time to the 1st January, 1869, 4,924 prisoners had been confined in it. The following is the financial result:—

	Deficit.	Surplus.
16 months ending Dec. 1862 ..	\$9,242	\$ .....
Year ending Dec. 1863 .....	2,237	3,011
" " 1864 .....	.....	10,097
" " 1865 .....	.....	20,108
" " 1866 .....	.....	20,027
" " 1867 .....	.....	15,203
Totals .....	\$11,479	\$67,446

If the Detroit House of Correction case be made more than self-sustaining, as the above figures prove, the sooner the experiment is tried in Canada the better. Mr. Langmuir calculates that a central prison could be erected and fitted with machinery for \$135,000, that the annual expenditure would not be more than \$32,000, and that 250 prisoners would only require to make 400 per diem, to render the institution self-sustaining. Whatever system of industrial labour were commenced, this amount could be easily exceeded, and instead of the county prisons costing over \$100,000 per annum, the expense would be reduced to very moderate proportions. The sooner Mr. Langmuir's suggestions are acted upon the better.

## RECIPROCITY.

THE N. Y. *Financial Chronicle* in discussing what it calls "The Reciprocity movement in Canada," talks a good deal of the current nonsense about the vast inferiority of the Dominion to the United States, as measured by resources and material prosperity; by rate of progress and increase of population; and also assumes, apparently quoting from Hon. John Young's Waterloo speech, "that the United States are the largest customers of the Provinces, and for much that they have to sell, their only customers." Notwithstanding the inferiority of the Dominion, however, the *Chronicle* argues that we are strong enough to stand alone, and that on commercial grounds independence of England would be the best condition for us, and that that and free trade with the United States are alone needed to give an impetus to the development of our industrial and commercial resources.

Leaving the consideration of the "movement" in Canada, the *Chronicle* proceeds to discuss the reciprocity question from a United States point of view, and in so doing takes what appears to be a very sensible and practical line of argument. The following is its manner of treating the subject:—

For many reasons this movement should meet with encouragement and, as far as practicable, co-operation on the part of the people of the United States. Under the existing tariff, the revenues accruing to the government from our trade with British America do not exceed \$4,000,000, and the sum is of small importance compared with the advantages to be derived from reciprocal trade between the two countries. Since the expiration of the reciprocity treaty our trade with British North America has diminished year by year, until but little remains of our former exchange of produce and merchandises which, in 1863, amounted in value to nearly fifty millions. Under that treaty the great bulk of the breadstuffs product of the lower provinces found its way to the seaports of the Eastern and Middle States, affording a profitable business to our railroads and shipping. Since its expiration this trade has died out. What has been lost to New York and other American ports has been gained by Montreal. The receipts of wheat at that city during the present season exceeded those of last year by 331 per cent.; while the exports to Europe by way of the St. Lawrence, will exceed that of last year by 521 per cent. From sharing any of the profits of advantages of this trade, the forwarders and shippers of the United States are now excluded. In addition to this, large amounts of lumber and other valuable products are now directed from their natural proper course to the seaboard. The benefits of a reciprocity that shall reopen the former channels of trade, and revive the business once mutually advantageous and profitable, are fully appreciated by the practical men of both countries. We need the coal, gypsum, fish and lumber of the Maritime Provinces, and the live stock, breadstuffs and general produce of Canada, both for consumption and export. They, in return, will take our manufactures, besides receiving a considerable share, at least, of these importations from other countries through our ports. More than this, it is of the utmost importance that the transportation routes of both countries should be mutually free. One great obstacle in the way of our more rapid commercial development is the enormous cost of transportation from the West to the seaboard.

The fullest competition between the railroads and canals of both countries, is the best possible means by which to obtain control of the European markets as an outlet for surplus products. The inadequacy of the railroads and canals of the Eastern and middle States, dependent as they are on the Michigan Central and Michigan Southern railroads, as the only connecting link with the railroad system of the north-west, and the consequent delays and expenses attending the Eastward movement of produce and the distribution of merchandise throughout the interior, make the question of reciprocity one of vital practical importance; the true solution of which can only be found in the establishment of free commercial intercourse between the two countries.

It is probable that, in some form, the question of reciprocity with Canada will be brought up during the next session of Congress. If so, we hope the movement now organized in the Provinces will be met with a disposition on our part to accede to renew the relations formerly existing between the two countries. Whatever may be the ultimate political destiny of British North America, it is certain that the discussion of any scheme of annexation is ill advised and premature. The people of the Provinces do not desire it, nor would it be the policy of our government to accede to such a proposition at the present time, even if it were made ingood faith, and with the unanimous consent of the people. Indefinite territorial expansion is not the aim of true statesmanship, but reciprocal trade relations are highly important to both countries.

## THIS SEASON'S PORK TRADE

HAS commenced in parts of Ontario, but not as briskly as we frequently find it. We do not consider this at all attributable to a deficiency in the number of hogs which are in condition and ready for the market. The supply will, we feel every confidence, be found quite equal to former years if not greater; but the farmers have been so busy this fall, and their whole work has lagged so far behind, that they have not been able to attend to the dressing of their hogs as promptly as usual. In some localities, however, deliveries by no means inconsiderable have already been made, and the quality is spoken of as excellent in general, although some farmers will persist in fattening in an objectionable manner. Up to the present time, prices continue to range high, much higher, in fact, than many anticipated before the season began. The likelihood of a decline from the high prices of last winter was predicated from the belief that the wants of the British Isles will be less than usual, the supply of cattle and hogs being greater there than twelve months ago. On the other hand, it is contended there is a great dearth of old meats, and consequently pork will be in as great demand as last season. If we can accept the statements of the Chicago and Cincinnati Journals, there has been no lack of hogs and corn to feed them in the West. The trade there promises to be brisk and animated, although the position of packers is admitted to be one of considerable risk, for it is impossible to judge, from present appearances, what the condition of prices will be by the middle of January. Canadian buyers would do well, therefore, to operate with caution, closely scrutinizing the quality of the arrivals they purchase, and not holding large stocks too long at one time. We cannot too strongly impress upon them our remark about the quality of dressed hogs, for our city buyers are every year becoming more particular on this point, and allow a greater difference in price than formerly between carcasses of different quality.

## A SHORT CHAPTER OF LIES.

WE clip the following paragraph from the *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, New York:—

"The United States is not the only nation noted for rapidly growing large debts. The debt of the Canadian Dominion, on our northern borders, at the beginning of the Confederation, some two years ago, was something like \$77,500,000. Since the present Government have had charge of affairs that debt has increased by something between thirty and fifty millions, and large sums have been voted for the erection of fortifications and the strengthening of old ones. The Government has also decided to spend \$20,000,000 upon the Intercolonial Railway, which, it is said, might have been built for half that sum by a route two hundred miles shorter than the one chosen. Canada appears to be going from bad to worse. The public treasury is regarded as legitimate plunder, and the provinces are destitute of capital, and without credit to borrow. For these reasons the contemplated scheme of a Canadian railroad to the Pacific is being opposed by resolutions at public meetings."

Alas! what is going to become of us? We are, evidently, in some way going to the dogs; but somehow or another, the operation does not seem to injure us very much in the estimation of those who are chiefly interested, namely, of our creditors. Latest quotations from the London stock market do not indicate a panicky feeling in the Dominion or Pro