

securing a favorable settlement, would be likely, if it produced any effect at all, to make peace more difficult to procure, by giving the Boers extravagant hopes of something not likely to be granted. It is right to take as merciful a view as is consistent with reason and future safety; but universal amnesty, at the start, would remove the restraints on the irreconcilables, whom reason and due precaution unite in declaring ought at least to be subject to a period of probation before being admitted to full amnesty. But the discussion of the resolution is not to be regretted; the tone and spirit of it were all that could be desired; even Mr. Bourassa was at his best, and the Premier exceeded himself in tact and ability; the leader of the Opposition also did well.

The Minister of Finance has given notice of a bill to amend the Ottawa Improvement Act, which will capitalize the grant of \$60,000, so as to enable the commissioners to enter upon a comprehensive scheme of improvement. In England, the Government from time to time makes large contributions in aid of municipalities, and in France the Government expends great sums on the improvements of Paris; but in Canada, the rule is, that neither the general nor the provincial government pays any local taxes at all; in this respect claiming privileges which the Sovereign does not enjoy in England. Mr. Howland's municipal organization for Ontario has a great work before it, and one in which there are rich laurels to be won. There are whole blocks in the heart of Toronto where there are no sidewalks, because the Government, owning the land, refuses to bear any share of the cost. Let municipal reformers look to Europe for models, and if they keep their eyes open, they will be astonished at the information they will be able to gather. The great American municipalities are sinks of iniquity, where for the most part there is little to be learned except what to avoid.

The bill ratifying the issue of \$20,000,000 additional stock by the C.P.R. Company does not alter the position of the company with regard to its right to earn 10 per cent. on the stock before it is liable to pay local taxes on its property. \$65,000,000 is, without the new issue, the stated amount of the stock; and beyond that amount, the issue of new stock will not save it from taxation; that being the limit of the exemption. What amount the company expended on the road, apart from the bonuses it received, has never been made public. Some critics have contended that, in estimating the proper limit of exemption, reference should be had only to the amount of its own money which it expended on the road and its equipment. But the public had no means of knowing what this amount was; and it was officially stated in Parliament, the other day, that an order-in-council had been passed providing that an immediate reference be made to the courts, for the purpose of determining what amount had been actually expended in the construction of the road. When this is done, the deduction of the amount of the subsidies should give the amount the company had expended of its own capital. But the facts are complicated by the intervention in the work of the Construction Company, which consisted in part at least of members of the railway company. Some damaging disclosures are pos-

sible, if we look to the precedent of the Ames frauds in the construction of one of the American Pacific railways.

WHEAT AND FLOUR DUTIES.

The first we learn of the effect of the new British duty on wheat and flour is that the bakers of Liverpool and some other places have added a penny to the four-pound loaf. A few experiments, made at the outset, to raise the price of bread, may not be decisive of the effect which the new duties may generally produce after a while, when the general result has been definitely ascertained. A rise of a farthing per lb. on bread is one that would be distinctly felt by the poor. The amount is much greater than the duty, and the bakers instead of bearing the weight of the burthen themselves are not unnaturally trying to shift it to the shoulders of the general consumers, and to make a trifle besides. The expectation expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the incidence of the tax was not based on the foundation of orthodox political economy. The general rule is that the consumer pays all the import duty received by the Government, and a good deal more that goes into the pockets of private persons. The first cargo of wheat on which the duty was chargeable paid £600, or about \$3,000. It is not probable that the bakers will consent to be the sole victims of the tax, though they may not be able generally to add a penny to every loaf. Those who try to get so great an advantage, as this figure implies, may find that they have overreached themselves, and that they will have to be satisfied with less, or submit to a serious loss of trade. The American plan of combining to extract from consumers unreasonable profits is not likely to succeed in England. There will probably be an addition of a half-penny to each loaf, partly because this is practically the lowest coin current in the United Kingdom. It would of course be possible to coin a sufficient supply of farthings. Much loss is caused to consumers, in some countries, from the absence of an adequate supply of small coins; and, in England, bread is the one thing above all others in which an addition to the price is most felt.

GENERAL DRY GOODS.

Wholesale dealers say the spring dry goods business has been very active this season; in fact, so far this has been a record year. Trade during the past week, however, was not quite up to the mark, which was due, no doubt, to the unfavorable weather. Most country merchants are ready to declare they are busier this season than usual, but are waiting for warm weather and for the farmers to have finished their seeding operations for still more active trade. They continue to note a call for high-class and comparatively expensive goods, which would appear to be growing more and more marked, and there can hardly be a stronger proof of improved circumstances among the people. These reports of prosperity are not confined to one district or one province, but are general from practically all parts of the Dominion. So far as we can judge, there is no reason why this state of things should not continue to exist so long as there is such a