

Improvement rolls along in her car more rapidly than ever.

A large meeting of persons interested in phosphate mining was held at Ottawa on Tuesday, for the purpose of forming an association. Alex. Cowan, of Brockville, was elected president, John McLaren, of Templeton, vice-president, and W. A. Allan, of Ottawa, secretary-treasurer. The Phosphate Act, passed by the Quebec Legislature, was discussed, and the meeting was unanimously in favor of its amendment. A committee was appointed to draft a petition setting forth the objections of the association to the Act, and to suggest amendments. The President, Vice-President, Mr. Milley and Mr. Gerald Brown were appointed a deputation to wait upon the Quebec Government, present the petition, and explain the grievances complained of. They propose that licenses be granted, enabling the licensee to explore a certain lot or a number of lots, with the option of purchase at or before the expiration of the license, at one dollar per acre, and that the royalty of 50c. per ton be abolished.

The Quebec City Council proposes to reduce the salaries of all its officials from 10 to 25 per cent. A resolution has also been adopted by the Council authorizing the Mayor to sign notes for renewing the floating debt of the city, amounting to between \$300,000 and \$400,000. The motion was opposed by one of the aldermen on the ground that the banks had advanced the money illegally, and now wanted to better their unfortunate condition by blinding the city into renewing its notes. He believed that instead of continuing to pay 8 per cent. the city could make its own terms with the banks, forcing them to take at payment city bonds at par, and bearing but 6 per cent. The Council will also appoint an engineer to go over the line of the North Shore Railway and report progress, in order that the Council may be in a position to pay the Government the amount due on the Railway.

Perhaps no branch of trade, originated in a simple venture for experimental purposes, has ever assumed such extraordinary proportions within so short a space of time as the exportation of beef cattle from this country and the United States to Great Britain. The steady and increasing demand in the home market, the remunerative prices obtained, and the rapidity and facility with which the animals are carried in good order to their destination have naturally induced an increase in the number of persons engaged in the trade, and Texas stock traders, in particular, are said to be entering into it upon a very large scale. There is a danger to our minds that the business may be overdone by overstocking the home markets. Such, however, does not appear to be the opinion of Mr. Bellingham, ex-M.P.P., for Argentine, who is at present in England, and who writes as follows on the subject. He says:—"It may relieve the anxieties of shippers to know that however large their exports the consumers here can absorb them. England and Scotland are of course the countries that most largely furnish the beef and mutton non-producers need; but it will convey an idea how enormous the consumption must be, to know that apart from the herds of England and Scotland, Ireland ships annually six hundred and fifty thousand fat beasts to the English markets; while foreign countries, namely Denmark and Spain, send two hundred and fifty thousand. The aggregate number of pounds of meat must be five hundred millions brought annually into England and eaten by the urban populations. Yet, with this enormous flow of food into England, prices of fat cattle are on the rise. You have free trade with England and a market you cannot overstock. Hence, your farmers can embark with confidence in stall-feeding for export, and rearing horses."

**A USEFUL WORK.**—Every retailer is interested in the quality of the butter made by his farming customers. "Willard's Practical Butter Book," advertised on another page, should be in the hands of every person interested in butter making. Our readers should order a supply at once, read the work themselves and recom-

mend it to their customers. Canadian butter will never command remunerative prices till we drive Oleomargarine out of the English markets. There is no denying the fact the imitation article, sold as such in the English markets, in the improved manufacture of which the skill of the ingenious Parisians and Londoners is being continually applied, has largely superseded the genuine article of butter, simply because it is cheap and more palatable than the greater part of the butter we have been manufacturing within the past year in Canada. Let every farmer, dairyman and dealer in butter get a copy of the book referred to and practically apply its teachings to his business, and our word for it, the price will be returned to him a hundred-fold.

#### THE PRICES OF LABOR SINCE 1860

From the most reliable sources of information and as the result of patient inquiry, the Philadelphia Press publishes comparative tables of the prices of labor in 1860, 1870, 1874 and 1878. The result shows that in thirty-two pursuits wages have increased from 1860 to 1878 from 7 to 110 per cent., or an average of about 41 per cent., and that in twenty-five avocations they have decreased from 1 to 5 per cent. From the tables referred to, the following is taken to show the changes which have occurred, by giving the daily wages of mechanical and general out-door labor:

	1860.	1870.	1874.	1878.
Farm labor with board.	\$ 84	\$1 35	\$1 13	\$ 69
Ordinary labor with b'd.	79	1 16	99	1 00
Ord' labor with't b'd.	1 19	1 65	1 40	1 25
Bricklayers.....	1 82	3 00	2 89	2 50
Carpenters.....	1 59	2 05	2 37	2 25
Blacksmiths.....	1 47	2 43	2 32	2 60

The table showing the wages of people employed in factory and mill labor indicates very much the same fluctuation, except that for no grade of operatives is the compensation less at the present time than in 1860. No statistics are given showing the wages of women employed otherwise than in factories, hotels and private houses as servants. In hotels the wages of all classes of female labor averaged a third more per month at the present time than in 1860, while servants in private houses receive from 75 to 100 per cent. more now than in 1860. These inquiries make no attempt to ascertain the relative amount of employment for the various grades of labor now as compared with the supply at other times. If it is assumed that the supply regulates the wages—that a supply less than the demand would enhance the price of wages, and the reverse if the supply was greater than the demand—there would appear to be more employment now in proportion to those who want it than in 1860. Without reference to the ratio of the unemployed to the whole number of people desiring to be employed, it appears that with the prices of the staple articles of food and clothing, rather cheaper now than in 1860, and with wages considerably higher on the average, those who have employment ought to live as comfortably as before the war. One great cause of complaint arises from the fact that during the "flush times," as the war period is termed, all classes of people in this country fell into extravagant modes of living. Now that the pinch comes, which all feel, all alike are unwilling to go back to the more frugal practices. Should all classes practice the economy of 1860 in 1878 there would be less lamentation and much more contentment. At the present time the above figures contain a lesson of practical value. It is that the increase in the price of wages which ruled from 1865 to 1873 was not proportionate to the increase of the prices of food and raiment. The price of labor in any department is the last to feel the effect of any rise in general prices. If Messrs. Voorhees, Butler & Co. should succeed in repealing the Resumption Act, the purchasing power of the paper money of the country would depreciate, or, in other words, the prices of food and raiment would rise, so that the wages of the laborer would purchase less than at the present time, while he would stand no chance of securing an increase of compensation.

**GOOD WORDS OF CANADA.**—The London Daily Telegraph of the 18th ult. has the following editorial with reference to the resources of Canada:—

It would be a curious subject of inquiry how many Englishmen really understand all that is implied in the phrase "the resources of Canada," and whether any Englishmen are aware that these resources include nearly everything which England wants to complete and supplement her own materials of prosperity. Is it a field for emigration that is wanted for the surplus of our home population? Then here we have in a purely British dependency an extent of territory almost equal to the whole of Europe, containing in its centre province alone one hundred and sixty millions of acres, available for farming or grazing purposes, but embracing altogether "a marvellous breadth of fertile and unoccupied land, with a healthy invigorating climate," enjoying free institutions, and already the home of a peaceful, loyal, industrious, and contented people. Is it sources of food supply for the mother country? The rich and easily cultivated soil of Canada now yields a large surplus for export, which is capable of indefinite extension; its cattle are shipped over to English markets in thousands, tending to amount to millions; it has ready means of internal communication by its rivers and railways; and it has inexhaustible fisheries in the lakes and streams. Are minerals, metals, timber, or the raw material of many manufactures wanted? We are officially told that, besides immense deposits of coal, there are iron ore, petroleum, salt, and the precious metals, not only in the vast undeveloped interior, but also on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboard. We have but to put a laborious people in possession of these elements of agricultural and industrial prosperity, we have only to increase tenfold the present population of four millions, and we shall then have a source of imperial strength and a constant market for our manufactures which would enable us to look with comparative indifference on hostile or discriminating tariffs in foreign States. The facts upon which such speculations may be founded were detailed at length in a most interesting paper from the pen of Mr. Sandford Fleming, the engineer-in-chief of the Canadian Pacific Railway, read at the Royal Colonial Institute on Tuesday evening; and they were supplemented by the remark, now happily too familiar to require enforcement, that the Canadians "are proud to be British subjects, and by no means unwilling to join in the trials and struggles of the mother country." Canada is growing rapidly; the greatest part of its vast extent will ere long be connected by a railway which will one day reach the Pacific; and the very best service Englishmen can render to the Empire of which they are so justly proud is to replenish, strengthen, and build up that North American Britain which will guard their interests loyally in one hemisphere, and add, by material power and moral influence, to their safety as well as grandeur.

#### THE 29TH OF FEBRUARY.

The question whether the 29th of February is legally a day or not, has lately been presented to a local court in Indiana. There is authority in that State to the effect that the 28th and 29th of February are to be counted as one day; but when the Supreme Court so decided, it had not examined an ancient English statute concerning leap year, passed in the twenty-third year of Henry III., which bears upon the subject. Accordingly, in the case to which we refer, the Judge determined to consider the question *de novo*; and he came to the conclusion that the 29th of February must be regarded as a day in contemplation of law, as much as any other, and must be reckoned in the legal computation of time, where days are concerned. "Is a man who works on Feb. 28 and 29 to have pay for one day only?" he asks. "Has a judgment rendered on Feb. 28 no priority as a lien over one rendered on Feb. 29? Could a man sentenced to be hung on Feb. 29 lie