

One more combination—the great Metal Syndicate—has come to a bad end. The Comptoir d'Escompte, of Paris, became banker for the conspirators, contrary it is said to the advice of the director, M. Denfert Rochereau, who, on Tuesday, when he felt a run coming, bought a pistol and shot himself. Another account says that he lost \$600,000 of his own money in the venture, and the suicide makes it probable that he was a heavy loser. The corner in copper increased the amount so much that a collapse at last became imminent. The quantity of copper held had risen from 45,000 tons last year to 120,000 tons. Last August the price had been artificially forced up to £500 a ton, when English buyers, driven out of the market, made war on the syndicate of conspirators. The consumption of copper had been reduced to a minimum. The owners of copper mines were getting enormous prices and realizing unheard of profits: but at length they had agreed to a reduction of 20 per cent. Yet the price was still preposterously high, and on Tuesday, the owners of the great copper mines in the United States resolved on a reduction of 80 per cent. The industries using copper have been greatly hindered, and they will now proceed with increasing vigor. A conspiracy of this kind to raise prices abnormally high ought to be made impossible by international agreement. The run on the Comptoir d'Escompte was vigorous all Wednesday, but it weathered the storm of the day, and waited for a new attack.

#### COMMERCIAL UNION AT WASHINGTON.

When the Fishery Treaty was under discussion at Ottawa last session, Sir Charles Tupper assured the House that during his residence at Washington he had never met a public man who was in favor of unrestricted reciprocity, nor one who was not in favor of Commercial Union. This illustration of the reception which the two schemes meet has just been confirmed by the unanimous resolution of the House of Representatives in favor of the latter project. The resolution, introduced by Congressman Hitt, was carefully worded, concise, and comprehensive. It read:

"Be it resolved, That whenever it shall be duly certified to the President of the United States that the Government of the Dominion of Canada has declared a desire to establish Commercial Union with the United States, having a uniform revenue system, like internal taxes to be collected, and like import duties to be imposed, on articles brought into either country from other nations, and no duties upon trade between the United States and Canada, he shall appoint three commissioners to meet those who may be likewise designated to represent the Government of Canada, to prepare a plan for the assimilation of the import duties and internal revenue taxes of the two countries, and an equitable division of receipts, in a Commercial Union, and said commissioners shall report to the President, who shall lay the report before Congress."

By this resolution Canada is not asked to adopt the American tariff and excise laws as a means of attaining Commercial Union with the Republic. The initiative is taken by the House, so far as to declare its readiness to consider a scheme of Commercial Union. It can do nothing

more unless Canada should signify its readiness to establish such a union; and in the event of the Parliament at Ottawa doing so, the House of Representatives will be ready to appoint three commissioners to prepare a plan of assimilating the customs and excise duties of the two countries, and an equitable division of the revenues. The report of such commissioners would have to receive the sanction of Congress. The Senate did not concur in Mr. Hitt's resolution, though it is believed to be in favor of it. The same unanimity in the Senate which had been attained in the House was desired by its promoters, and as this was made impossible by the objections of an eastern member, the Senators were not called upon to vote. The ground of his objection was, singularly enough, that Commercial Union would, in his opinion, prevent the annexation of Canada to the Republic.

If Congress had asked Canada, without circumlocution, to accept the United States tariff and internal revenue duties, it must have been felt by Mr. Hitt and his friends that a negative reply would have been certain. From the present House of Commons at Ottawa a negative reply had in fact been given by anticipation, substantially if not in exact terms. No doubt the belief that Commercial Union implied a surrender of our power to arrange our own tariff and to determine the rate of our excise duties told against it when the question was put in an abstract form. But the vote was a party vote, and the decision of the question must rest with the electorate, at the next general election. Congress does not set out with insisting that we should accept the American revenue laws bodily, nor in substance, there is little doubt, it would come to this. It cannot be denied that Commercial Union has many friends in the rural constituencies of Canada, but that they form a majority of the electorate is more than doubtful. The Province of Quebec would probably give a large majority against it. But Mr. Mercier must have believed that the majority was the other way when he favored Commercial Union in the Interprovincial Conference. The confidence that he then felt seems since to have expired; for when asked in the House recently whether he intended to call for a vote on the resolutions of the Interprovincial Conference, his reply was that they had not been communicated to the Government! If Mr. Mercier, the Interprovincial delegate, neglected to communicate with Mr. Mercier the Premier, there must have existed a shrewd suspicion that the Minister did not want to be bothered with the resolves of the delegate. What would be the decision in Ontario it is not easy to guess, though there are indications that seem to show that sentiment is stronger than commercial temptation.

And only to some does Commercial Union offer a commercial temptation. To the manufacturers, as a rule, it is the reverse of tempting, though some of them are ready to welcome it. But from them, as a body, it would meet the most strenuous opposition. With them, it may be confessed, it is not so much a matter of sentiment as of dollars. The opposing sentiment

must be sought mainly outside the manufacturers; it is scattered through the community, without quite leavening the whole lump, and is a quantity difficult to gauge. But that it is strong does not admit of question, stronger, quantity for quantity—if such a comparison can be made—than commercial temptation; and in quantity we think the sentimentalists, reinforced by the manufacturers, who have other motives, have the best of it. But this is a conjecture the correctness of which nothing but the test of a popular vote could determine. The manufacturers would go where they believe their interest leads them, unless there were something like a certainty that their allegiance would be interfered with; and they believe that their interest is antagonistic to Commercial Union. Among traders more sentiment is to be found than some would be disposed to credit them with, and it is not generally subjected to the strain which would be put upon it if they believed that their interest lay in Commercial Union.

Unquestionably the agriculturists would benefit by such an international arrangement, but the advantages which they would get would not be unaccompanied by drawbacks. And the trade between the two countries forming the union, for commercial purposes, would undergo great development, though this would be partly, perhaps largely, at the expense of Canada's trade with Great Britain. Some gain of national wealth could scarcely fail to result; but this to some extent would be off-set by losses. If the farmer gained, as he would, the manufacturer would lose; so at least each of them believes, and in a greater or less degree they are both in the right. If the farmers as a body once became convinced that their interest lay in Commercial Union, a great step towards its realization would have been taken. But with them sentiment would even then often be stronger than commercial temptation, and they never could be brought to give an unanimous vote in favor of a measure by which they believed their material interests would be benefited. Party is strong, and would determine the votes of large numbers otherwise than on the merits of a special issue presented to them. All we can say at present is, that we should be surprised if an appeal to the electorate should result in favor of Commercial Union.

The scheme appears in a less repulsive form than it would have worn if Canada had been asked to adopt the United States revenue laws bodily. Any possible plan of Commercial Union would exact from both countries the surrender of as much freedom in regulating its own tariff and excise duties as would be necessary to arrive at a common agreement. Every commercial treaty abridges the liberty of the contracting parties in the same way. It is a question of degree, and it is impossible not to believe that the sacrifice that would be demanded of Canada would be greater than that which the United States could be induced to make. The smaller interest would be expected to yield to the greater: that is the fear, and it accords with all that has been said, whenever the roughest outlines of a concrete plan have been sketched. At