

deck-loads of sheep and cattle; that nearly all of these steam-ships take their supplies of provisions and breadstuffs from this side of the ocean?

The Massachusetts Commission, in the report we have cited, concede that we can not give up the through business, for it would be done by others, and would carry with it all other business activity. This is not a logical deduction from the premises of the Commission, but is undoubtedly correct. That business must be useful to the local traffic which can not be detached from it without its loss. In the past, New York has kept pace in its growth with the growth of its through business by the Erie Canal. It still clings to that canal, and is willing to sink the interest on its cost for the preservation of its business. It has lavished on that canal three times the amount advanced by Massachusetts for its tunnel; and if New York can afford to abandon all revenue, and reduce the tolls on its canal to a point barely sufficient for its maintenance, *a fortiori* Massachusetts can afford to do the same with the tunnel, which has cost less than one-third the outlay on the Erie Canal. In the intense rivalry which now animates our seaboard cities and the lines that connect them with the West, it is the policy of each to study and countenance improvement, whatever shape it may assume, whether it be in opening new branches of commerce, in the substitution of steel for iron, in the models, mechanism, or materials, or in the selection of powerful engines, and loading trains to their full capacity in both directions. We should waste no funds in constructing lines planned by idle contractors or engineers. Let good sense, sagacity, and frugality rule the hour, and guide the action of our railways.

At this moment there is a tendency to extend our railways, and combine fragmentary parts into long and important lines, and these are countenanced by our great exporting cities. Doubtless they are on the right track. To the north the Dominion of Canada is making a great line from the Straits of Canso to the mines of Pictou, and thence along the Bay of Chaleurs and River St. Lawrence to Quebec and Ottawa, thence through the trackless wilderness to the borders of Alaska.

The railways of Canada are rather

strategic than commercial, designed by Great Britain to hold her provinces in subjection. They pass for nearly three thousand miles for most part through a wilderness, and can realize but little revenue for a long series of years. They will double the present debt of Canada, which now, under its costly government, exceeds one hundred and seventy millions. Besides this, she now pays a portion of our interest on national debt. Her debt *per capita* already exceeds our own, is becoming oppressive, and must eventually be assumed by England, for whose benefit it has been contracted. It will be many years before the chief railways of Canada compete successfully with our own. Her Great Western and Grand Trunk depend, to a great extent, upon the trade they can divert from our lines to the West by a circuitous competition, which has doubtless, to some extent, contributed to the reduction of rates.

There is another great enterprise, more commercial in its character, on which Canada is now engaged, expressly designed to compete not only with the Erie Canal and her own lines of railway, but also directly or indirectly with all our trunk lines from the sea-board to the West. This undertaking is fast advancing to completion. It is the enlargement of the Welland Canal and the canals of the St. Lawrence to admit steamships of twelve hundred tons.

Canada is desirous to supersede New York, and it must be conceded that her temptation is a strong one, as our lake ports annually receive ten million tons of cereals, in addition to vast amounts of live stock and provisions. New York and Boston now hold Montreal in check by the Erie Canal and Central Railway. In a few weeks Boston will gain some points by the tunnel, and its new route to the coal mines, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. Upon the completion of the canals on the Niagara and St. Lawrence, New York will be obliged to make strenuous efforts to hold its own. Should it fail, it will doubtless be its policy to open a ship-canal from the St. Lawrence into Lake Champlain, and possibly thence to the head of navigation on the Hudson, in the benefits of which Boston will participate, and to which it may lend its aid.

If, however, the railways on the shores of the lakes, St. Lawrence, and the Hudson compete successfully with the lakes