

THE ST. LAWRENCE AND THE GRAIN TRADE.

The St. Lawrence route is not holding its own in the matter of grain export. We have already published statistics of the export of breadstuffs &c. from Montreal, showing that the season of navigation just closed does not compare favorably, in respect of quantity of grain shipped, with any one of seven years last past. Does this mean that our canals and water route are being left behind in the competition with the American trunk lines of railway?

From 1876 to 1880, the quantity of grain shipped by this route ran up from twelve millions to twenty and a half millions of bushels. From 1780 the decline was abrupt, to eight and a quarter millions in 1882, nine and a half in 1883 and seven and a half millions this year. The exact quantities are thus, given by the *Montreal Gazette*, of the aggregate export of grain during the last eight seasons:—

Season	1884.....	7,445,903 bushels.
"	1883.....	9,593,918 "
"	1882.....	8,295,825 "
"	1881.....	13,205,616 "
"	1880.....	20,507,273 "
"	1879.....	17,107,478 "
"	1878.....	14,023,150 "
"	1877.....	12,090,458 "

The principal decrease as compared with last year, it appears, has been in maize, which has fallen behind 2,067,945 bushels, while wheat has decreased only 198,932 bushels and barley 82,652 bushels. Exports this year of peas have increased 98,782 bushels and oats 132,443 bushels.

The exports of flour, however, were 508,728 barrels—an increase of 101,193 barrels over last year, which more than counterbalances the decrease in wheat. They were, indeed, the largest of the whole eight seasons, being 140,000 bushels in advance of the average quantity shipped yearly for that period. The following figures show the export of flour during the last eight seasons:—

Season	1884.....	508,728 barrels.
"	1883.....	407,635 "
"	1882.....	387,851 "
"	1881.....	278,821 "
"	1880.....	383,397 "
"	1879.....	351,067 "
"	1878.....	316,569 "
"	1877.....	314,895 "

Among the reasons for this preference of the St. Lawrence route for flour may be its greater coolness as compared with southern United States routes, whether on this continent or on the Atlantic.

It is interesting to note to what ports these breadstuffs have gone. We therefore append a *resume* of the total shipments to particular ports via River St. Lawrence from the opening of navigation, May 2nd, to its close, November 20th, 1884, nearly seven months:—

LIVERPOOL.	
Wheat.....	1,561,865 bushels.
Indian corn.....	1,403,783 "
Pease.....	596,488 "
Oats.....	52,988 "
Barley.....	998 "
Flour.....	90,097 barrels.
Oatmeal.....	21,793 "
Cornmeal.....	358 "

LONDON.	
Wheat.....	498,783 bushels.
Indian corn.....	60,835 "
Pease.....	420,733 "
Oats.....	54,057 "
Rye.....	16,618 "
Flour.....	48,596 barrels.
Oatmeal.....	580 "

GLASGOW.

Wheat.....	1,214,200 bushels.
Corn, Indian.....	444,856 "
Pease.....	243,287 "
Oats.....	96,036 "
Flour.....	213,538 barrels.

BRISTOL.

Wheat.....	98,791 bushels.
Corn, Indian.....	16,023 "
Pease.....	62,627 "
Flour.....	9,260 barrels.

ANTWERP.

Wheat.....	102,962 bushels
Indian corn.....	4,000 "
Pease.....	78,769 "
Rye.....	106,578 "
Flour.....	288 barrels

HAMBURG.

Wheat.....	31,482 bushels
Indian corn.....	126,496 "
Pease.....	46,478 "
Oats.....	17,859 "
Flour.....	1,366 barrels

To Rotterdam 21,101 bushels of rye were shipped during the season, while 30,978 bushels of wheat went to Cork for orders, and 15,113 bushels of pease were sent to Newcastle-on-Tyne. To recapitulate, the shipments of the present year show an increase over last year in flour, oatmeal, cornmeal, pease and oats, but a decrease in wheat, corn, barley and rye.

Comparing the breadstuffs exports of 1884 with those of 1883, we find the aggregate of each kind to have been as under; the figures include 146,949 bbls. flour, and about 20,000 bushels of grain sent to lower St. Lawrence ports:

	1884.	1883.
Wheat,.. bushels	3,539,200	3,738,132
Indian corn ..	2,055,580	4,123,525
Pease	1,478,441	1,379,659
Oats	223,972	91,529
Barley ..	3,047	85,699
Rye.....	145,663	175,374
Oatmeal..	52,215	33,101
Cornmeal..	2,281	2,214
Flour	508,728	407,535

Turning from breadstuffs to provisions, dairy products, etc., we find the shipments of these to various ports as under:

LIVERPOOL.

Pot and pearl ashes, barrels	3,748
Pork	2,741
Lard	11,710
Butter	pgks.. 70,592
Cheese	boxes 772,261
Bacon and hams....	35,533
Canned meats	pgks.. 23,369
Phosphate.....	tons.. 8,366

GLASGOW.

Pot and pearl ashes, barrels	478
Pork.....	50
Lard.....	3,183
Butter.....	pgks.. 21,435
Cheese.....	boxes 107,763
Bacon and hams....	3,203
Canned meats.....	pgks.. 4,878
Phosphate.....	tons.. 1,992

LONDON.

Pot and pearl ashes, barrels	1,072
Lard	200
Butter	pgks.. 1,118
Cheese	boxes 52,060
Bacon and hams....	169
Canned meats.....	pgks.. 2,071
Phosphate.....	tons.. 5,337

BRISTOL.

Pot and pearl ashes, barrels	206
Butter	pgks.. 10,396
Cheese	boxes 188,229
Phosphate.....	tons.. 2,074

In addition to the 17,769 tons of phosphate tabulated above, there was sent to Dublin 200 tons; to Penarth, Wales, 100 tons; to Sunderland, 60 tons; to Antwerp, 285 tons; to Hamburg, 2,269 tons; to Rotterdam, 432 tons, making a total of this mineral of 21,115 tons as compared with 16,474 tons in the

previous season of navigation. To ports on the St. Lawrence below Montreal the shipments were: of butter, 11,920 pkgs.; cheese, 3,012 boxes; pork, 6,160 barrels; lard, 99 barrels; hams and bacon, 107 boxes; canned meats, 50 packages. Shipments of butter and cheese show, upon the whole, an increase over 1883, those of ashes, pork, lard, hams, bacon and canned meats, a decrease.

FREIGHTS ON FARM PRODUCE.

Loud have been the complaints of the farmers of our North-West about the railway freights on their produce. But they are not alone in this respect. Farmers in the Western United States make still louder complaints. The low price of produce makes anything like high rates of freight all the more keenly felt. The State of Illinois has a Railway and Warehouse Commission which assumes to have power to relieve the grievances of which the farmers complain. This commission proposes to reduce the rates on freight "in proportion to the great decline in the price of wheat and corn." This mode of exercising the powers of legislation is a novel one and must be liable to great abuse. Freights may be too high, but the legislative power of reducing them could be best exercised by the Legislature itself. Indeed, from the complaints made there seems to be much need for a remedy. The *New York Commercial Bulletin* collects some startling information on the subject from telegrams published by the Chicago Tribune. It finds "that the best wheat at Abilene, one of the wheat centres of Kansas, is worth but 46 cents a bushel, while the freight rate is 25 cents a bushel. The farmer gets \$6.50 an acre for a crop which it costs \$9 an acre to take out of the ground and deliver at the depot, allowing nothing for interest of capital. The inferior grades of wheat there, it would appear, are worth but 36 cents a bushel, or a little more than half the cost of production. Again, at Wichita, Kan., wheat ranges from 30 to 48 cents a bushel, and the freights are 27 cents a bushel, giving the farmer but 3 to 11 cents a bushel, more than the railroads charge for hauling it to Chicago.

As for the rates on corn, in most cases, we are told, they confiscate the crop. At numbers of points in Nebraska and Kansas the freight on a bushel of corn is much more than the farmer can sell it for at the station. At Central City, for example, it is selling at 15 cents a bushel, and the railroad rates thence to Chicago are 18 cents. Nor is this all; the railroads will carry a bushel of corn from Council Bluffs, on the western verge of Iowa, 500 miles, to Chicago for less than eight cents, but to bring it to Chicago from Des Moines, which is but half way across the State, they demand 11 cents. That is to say, they have competition at Council Bluffs, and discover that they can do the work for eight cents." These are samples of the charges complained of, as made by the railways when there is no check upon them, in the way of competition. "If," says the *Bulletin*, "the railways have any defence they had better get it ready, as nothing is more certain—unless current indications be misleading—than that the rising