

ago, Ill., to arrange the details of a proposed pool, has submitted its report. It recommended the organization of a national barbed-wire fence company, with a capital stock of \$2,000,000, divided into 20,000 shares of \$100 each, the organization to be accomplished under a charter issued to a similar committee of manufacturers on December 27, 1883. The proposed company will lease the works of the several members, and its officers and directors will have complete charge of the output as well as prices, the members being stockholders. The committee reported that it would be necessary to draught an agreement to be signed by the manufacturers before perfecting the proposed organization. It is expected that all manufacturers of barbed-wire in the United States will sign the agreement. The new company will probably be in operation by September 1.—*The American Mail*.

The Hudson's Bay Route.

This is the second year of the observations by the Canadian Government of the conditions which control the navigation of Hudson's Straits and Bay. The "Alert," sent out with a relief party to take the place of the men put on the different stations in the Straits and Bay last year, met a serious deteation in the ice which ended in an injury rendering it necessary for her to return to Newfoundland for repairs. When she came within sight of Resolution Island, at the entrance of Hudson Strait, she found the way blocked by a barrier of ice, in the grasp of which she remained for three weeks. During this time she does not appear to have drifted much, a fact which would seem to show that the ice current running from the north to the south was inactive during this time at this point. It does not follow, however, that the main body of the ice was not moving; the ice near shore in the embrace of which she was caught may have been stationary while the main body was moving. That the general stream of ice was running seems to be proved by the presence of icebergs south-east of this point. If this be so it is probable that a barrier of ice is liable to block the entrance of Hudson Strait every spring and early summer, in the neighborhood of Resolution Island. On the way up the "Alert" found the ice pack on the Labrador coast to vary in width from thirty five to one hundred miles. This gives us some idea of the ice stream, which drops into the ocean current, on the Labrador side of Davis Strait. To run against this current is a great waste of power. Vessels which go northward along the Greenland coast are favored by the ocean current which here runs north. The easiest way of getting up Davis Strait is to take advantage of this current. If the "Alert" had kept out further from the Labrador shore and struck the mouth of Hudson Strait farther north, she might have found a clear passage. It is possible that the jam of ice near Resolution Island may have stopped the entire ice-stream across the mouth of the Strait; but the chance of an open passage higher up Davis Strait into Hudson Strait may be counted among the possibilities, and on a future occasion it ought to be tested.

It is at least possible that a barrier of ice exists at the entrance of Hudson Strait every year, in the earlier summer months. It is a remarkable fact that the Dutch fishing vessels, hundreds of which visited Davis Strait every year in succession for a century, never appear to have entered Hudson Strait. Some of them went nearly as far north as any modern exploring vessel has gone. How can we account for the fact of their not entering Hudson Strait, if it be not a barrier of ice in the ocean current in which immeasurable masses pass down? It is true that on going up they kept near to the Greenland coast; but in coming down they must often have fallen into the ocean current on the other side of the Strait. When they went so far north as they did, it is natural to suppose that they left no reasonably accessible fishing ground unexplored.

Last year's experience of the navigation of Hudson Strait and Bay did not fulfil the predictions which enthusiasts had so confidently made. The explanation, by way of excuse, was that it was an unusual season. But the vessel without difficulty got into Hudson Strait from which the "Alert" has this year been barred for three weeks. The beginning of this season is worse than the beginning of last season. What is to be the end we must wait to learn. In this matter our hopes or desires go for nothing. If the commercial value of this navigation were once assured, an immense impetus would be given to the development of the Northwest. But it is folly to assume that what is desirable is possible without sufficient experience to guide us. We know that the vessels of the Hudson Bay Company do manage to make one voyage a year between Liverpool and Port Nelson or Port Churchill; but a navigation that would suit the experiences of the fur trade proves little where bulky articles of raw agricultural produce have to be dealt with. If the proceeds of the harvest went by this route, and had to be kept over nearly a whole year, they would be subject to fluctuations of price which would make the handling of them a perilous thing.

Railway communication between Hudson Bay and Winnipeg would become a necessity in case the question of navigation were settled. But till this question is decided the building of a railway would have nothing to justify it; the route is a through route or nothing. Land grants have been made for a railway, and the commencement of construction may be said to hang on the possibilities of the navigation. We do not believe that for the Northwest this is a matter of life and death, but it is undoubtedly one of supreme importance. The interests that depend on the issue can hardly be overstated. In the meantime there is nothing to do but wait patiently the accumulation of the facts which are to determine the issue. The process will not be a rapid one. The seasons are not all alike, and one or two favorable or unfavorable years would prove but little where the average of years has to determine. Here, as elsewhere, there may be cycles in the seasons which several years are necessary to complete. The condition of the Northwest is eminently unfavorable to the development of patience, a virtue without which the fruit of the observa-

tion of years cannot be gathered. This accounts for the fact that we have had pronounced so many snap judgments before there was a sufficient body of reliable facts to base any judgment at all upon.—*Monetary Times*.

Recent Legal Decisions.

MECHANICS' LIEN—EXEMPTION OF PUBLIC PROPERTY.—Public property cannot be the subject of a mechanics' lien, unless it is expressly provided by statute; such property is by implication excepted from lien statutes as much as from general tax laws, and for the same reasons. So held by the Supreme Court of Michigan in the case of *Knapp vs. Swaney*.

LIABILITY OF SURETIES—TREASURER'S BOND.—The undertaking of sureties on a treasurer's official bond is that he shall faithfully perform his duties; this involves the obligation of making correct reports, conforming to statutory requirements, as well as the payment of funds in his custody; and a false report by the treasurer constitutes a violation of official duty and a breach of this bond, rendering the sureties liable to the parties injured for such damages as are the legitimate consequences of the wrongful act. *Supervisors of Tompkins vs. Bristol*, decided by the New York Court of Appeals.

MUNICIPAL BONDS—VALIDITY—RAILROAD.—Bonds issued by a town for the construction of a railroad under an act authorizing the same, upon consent being obtained of a majority of the taxpayers, are void unless such consent has actually been given. The town is, however, remediless in case the assessors, contrary to the fact, certify that the requisite consent has been obtained, or in case the commissioners, acting upon the certificate, issue the bonds, but may have the proceedings reviewed on certiorari. *Town of Ontario vs. Hill*, decided by the New York Court of Appeals and noted in *Albany Law Journal*.

NOTE PAID DUE—LIABILITY OF MAKERS.—The case of *Coykerdall vs. Constable*, decided by the New York Court of Appeals, was one in which the owner of a past due note payable to bearer placed it in a bank for collection. The plaintiff, at the request of the principal debtor, paid the note to the bank, and the bank remitted the proceeds thereof to the owner and delivered the note to the plaintiff. The court held that the plaintiff obtained a good title to the note, and could maintain an action thereon against the makers as sureties, and that notwithstanding the bank had no authority to sell the note, yet the owner by receiving and retaining the money had ratified the act of his agent and was bound by it.—*Bradstreet's*.

THE V. P. Mining Co. are sending Mr. Greir, of Morely, to the fifteen Mile Creek, Spilluminchene River, 30 miles south of Golden City, B. C., to get 1,000 lbs of ore for shipment to New York, where it will be milled. In the event of the assay being favorable the company intends to erect a stamping mill at once. The company consists of Dan Mann, R. J. Whitla, D. K. Elliot, G. C. Elliot, of Winnipeg; L. Lukes, A. Ferlaud, and Dr. Coleman. This company had Dr. Coleman out prospecting all last summer.