

A very comfortable conclusion certainly for the head of the Board of Works to arrive at, but whether it be equally satisfactory to the public is another question. For ourselves, we still entertain some old-fashioned notions of the duty of a Government, to exercise their judgment without fear, favour or affection, for the welfare of their country, and of their responsibility to the collective wisdom of the nation, for their action. We trust that this responsibility may, in this instance, prove more than a mere name, and that our rulers may be made to understand that they are equally liable for non-feasance as for mal-feasance in office! What! is a great national work to be stopped to the certain damage and probable destruction of the trade of the country, because there is a conflict of opinion between two irresponsible parties how best it can be effected? Surely in such a case it is the duty of the responsible minister to decide,—he has the evidence before him, and the means at his disposal of procuring the best advice; and is he to stand still, and assign as a reason the "indifference" of the "merchants of Montreal," who have no such means of judging, but who have done their duty in bringing the matter before him?

"Agitation has stopped the work!" This is the first occasion on which such an excuse has been offered by a Minister of the Crown for doing nothing. We have heard of the "pressure from without" being the cause of great organic changes, but never of absolute inactivity!

We trust the Government of the country will, as respects its work at least, abandon this do-nothing policy,—exercise without delay, and with sound judgment, the power extended to them,—and trust to the representatives of the people to ratify their acts.

### A GLANCE AT CANADA WEST.

[Communicated.]

Canada West is decidedly the finest portion of the Province, both as it regards amenity of climate, and fertility of soil;—and as we promised in our last number, to touch upon certain characteristics of this section of the Province, of which we have not as yet treated,—we now proceed to fulfil that promise. We begin by observing that she has a more southerly latitude than Canada East can boast of—a difference of about three degrees. This gives to that southerly range lying along Lake Erie a decided advantage, not only commencing the warmth of summer at an earlier period but extending it to a later, and materially abating the rigors of winter. This is more particularly exemplified in the fact that peaches (a fruit which not only loves a warm climate, but cannot exist without it) are there successfully cultivated in the open grounds; and the climate is more mild throughout the whole extent of Lake Ontario, than what we have in Canada East.

The soil of Canada West like that of Canada East, is for the better part, especially where the heaviest crops of wheat are produced, composed principally of clay, enriched in the former case to a greater degree, with a vegetable mould—and the face of the country has less of the dead level than Canada East, and is consequently better adapted not only for cultivation, but for grazing.\* The best breeds of English cattle are being introduced into the country, and Agricultural Societies, by their premiums, are stimulating the farmers to healthy efforts in the improvement of their farms. Fine mill privileges abound in Canada West. The water power will indeed, prove one of the great sources of her wealth. Probably there are no finer wheat growing districts than the Home and Newcastle—in many parts of which the yield is very great, varying from thirty to fifty bushels to the acre. This is quite equal to any thing we find along the northern shore of Lake Erie; and, as we may add, not surpassed by any section of North America. Some of the finest farms in Canada West are to be found about Brantford and Woodstock. Evidences of the "old country" farmer's labours are there manifest; and it is only matter of regret, that among the number of immigrants to this country, we have not more of those who can handle the plough and the rake. As the granaries of Canada are to be found along the shores and inlets of Erie and Ontario, our warmest wishes will ever be for those Agricultural Districts.

As regards the cities and villages of Canada West, many are found to exhibit proofs of the rapid growth of those of our neighbours south of forty-five. Hamilton is probably a fair specimen. It was laid out in 1813, about one mile from the bay, on account of the swampy nature of the ground along the bay shore; and, it now numbers 7,000 inhabitants, and contains many handsome buildings of stone and of brick. The table land, extending from Niagara river far into the west, runs along the south side of the town, and affords delightful situations for "country seats"; besides presenting within its bosom an excellent quarry of limestone, of ready access, and easily worked, and of which free use is being made. One of the largest importing houses of Canada

\* We must, however, except from these remarks the Eastern Townships, which are not to be exceeded as a farming country by any portion of this Province.

has an establishment here well worth examination, from its extent and convenience of arrangement. And in many other respects Hamilton promises to be eventually the largest city in Canada West. This cannot be doubted when its position is taken into consideration. It lies on a magnificent bay (secure at all seasons of the year) at the very head of Lake Ontario. It has a country around and above it of great luxuriance and extent, pouring into it, almost exclusively, of its abundance, and receiving from it the necessaries supplied by commerce. One heavy pressure upon the trade of this place is the tax imposed upon merchandize passing into the bay—a toll of five shillings on every ton. The origin of this tax was as follows:—A canal was required to be opened through the sand bar forming the entrance to the bay, and piers of heavy timber work were constructed on either side, for a hundred rods or so, to protect it from filling up—and this channel has to be kept clear by dredging, from the constant washing of the lake inwards. The merchandize and produce therefore entering this bay is taxed to keep its entrance in repair. By an Act of our last Provincial Parliament, Hamilton has been elevated to the rank of a city. What contributed much to its prosperity, are the splendid roads which communicate with all parts of the country, terminating at Hamilton as a common centre.

Toronto, however, claims precedence of all other places in Canada West, in point of extent, wealth, number of its public buildings and population. Indeed no place in that section of the Province, has shot ahead with such amazing rapidity as Toronto. In 1830 its population was 2,550, and it now numbers upwards of 20,000. It, too, has a harbour of great extent and of comparative safety; and the country around is extensively settled and exhibits much fertility. As it has the start of other places, it will probably keep a head for many years to come.

Kingston has acquired a degree of prominence from the fact of its having been the great military depot for Canada West, and the place of re-shipment of all produce and merchandize going and coming from above that point. The expenditure of the present season upon military works in and about Kingston, will probably not be less than £50,000 to £75,000. Here is the termination of the Rideau Canal, and as it has a good country above, if not directly in the rear of it, it will doubtless be enabled to sustain itself under the great commercial change which is now taking place in the Province, although it has lost since the removal of Government nearly two thousand of its inhabitants. Its population at the present time is not far from 7,000—that is, within the limits of its corporation.

Having thus briefly touched upon the general features and agricultural interests of the country, and slightly noticed its leading cities, we will at once come to the principal matter in hand—and that is, the Trade of Canada West.

The trade of Canada West is not only an extensive one, but it is growing, and each successive year will witness a large increase. It is essential to the best interests of Canada that this trade be not diverted from its natural channel, the St. Lawrence; inasmuch as the Province has already, for the purpose of preserving it, incurred a debt of one million and a half in the construction of canals to make the river available. Now should the trade be diverted, and be made to pass through a foreign country, the Province would not only lose the profit arising from the use of her canals; but the country would be taxed to pay the interest upon the money thus invested, thus subjecting herself to something like a double tax upon her own improvements. This the country would not surely subject itself to, without there being a prospect of benefiting itself by so doing. To secure then, the trade upon the St. Lawrence, it is essential, as has been shown in the former numbers of our paper, that great modifications be made in our carrying trade, not only as regards the transit of goods and produce upon our inland waters; but, essentially, as regards freightage across the ocean. Canada cannot pay the high freights she is now paying and successfully compete in the English market with her neighbours. Nor is this her only drawback. Under the present state of things, she cannot obtain a sufficiency of shipping, even at the high prices now paying, to send her own produce to market. Between 200,000 and 300,000 barrels of Flour this season are stored over for want of shipping, to say nothing of the thousand cargoes of lumber lying in the coves at Quebec.

It must be apparent then to every one who will give a moment's reflection to the subject, that Canada cannot be tramped up against this enormous pressure upon her energies. She must give way, and become a declining dependence of the mother country, if Great Britain does not at once remove from her the shackles by which she is bound.

The wants of Canada are few; but those wants are now imperative. She wants all the restrictive measures which cripple her trade and paralyze her best energies removed. She wants to see on her waters from Lake Superior to the Gulf a class of vessels that shall do the business of the carrying trade for one-third the sum she has heretofore paid; and then, and not till then, will she be able to rise from her present prostrate position, and assume an attitude alike honourable to her as a Province, and a dependence of the greatest commercial nation the sun ever shone upon.