

NOTE.—The six per cent. lacking to the total of 1874 in the above table, is accounted for by the absence in the return for that year of any separation between Canadian and foreign goods exported. Thus our calculation had to deal with the total export for that year instead of with the Canadian produce only.

THE TRADE OF DETROIT.

We have received, through the courtesy of Mr. John K. MacIver, the secretary and treasurer of the Board, a copy of the statistical tables of the Detroit Board of Trade for the year 1883. It is matter of regret that the statistics now being compiled for the Toronto Board of Trade are not sufficiently complete to enable us to examine the trade of both cities at once, and thereby see what points of resemblance or of contrast, their commerce presents. But it is tolerably evident, from the figures which this pamphlet contains, that the "City of the Straits" of to-day is at least as much different from the Detroit of twenty-five years ago, as the Toronto of 1883 deserves the title of "Queen City" better than the same place of 1858.

At the earlier date, Detroit was by no means the manufacturing and wholesale centre she has since become. Nor did the quantities of grain then handled approach the proportions of recent years. The Michigan Central Railway was built, certainly, but there was no Canada Southern, no Detroit & Milwaukee, no Chicago & Grand Trunk. The railroads which have since developed the southern peninsula of Michigan so that it can now be said, with even greater force than then, in the words of the State motto: *Si queris peninsulam amenam, circumspice!* These railways were then mere projects, if indeed they were projects at all. She was a marine city, so far as her position on fresh water makes the term correct; an inland marine city, with a site unrivalled, on the banks of a stream bringing past her wharves the waters of three great inland seas, Superior, Huron and Michigan, with all the craft that floated upon them. From the time that the first steam-boat on Lake Erie, the curious mediæval-looking *Walk-in-the-water* startled the Indians of the Detroit River, to the time when the fast-multiplying railways compelled the shipmasters to take a lower seat, Detroit was a port of destination or a port of call for almost every steamer that plied upon the Great Lakes. And what steamers there were, twenty years ago! floating palaces, fit to compare in size and elegance with the steamers of the Hudson or the Sound. But their glory faded as the railroads grew.

Receipts and shipments of flour and grain at Detroit are given for ten years, ended with 1883. Flour receipts were larger in 1874 than in any year of the ten, the total being then 568,238 barrels and the shipments of the following year were the greatest of the decade, 412,836 barrels. Since then, the receipts have pretty steadily declined till in 1883 they were 176,191 barrels and shipments 197,534 barrels. The following is what the report has to say on the subject of flour dealings:—"The manner in which Eastern dealers obtain their flour has changed greatly in the past twenty years. Long ago they bought largely through Detroit commission merchants, and the revenue thus obtained was very large. Recently Eastern merchants have found it

more profitable to make their purchases direct from the mills in Minnesota, and in this way Detroit has been left "out in the cold." Minnesota flour has been gaining in favor of late, and the receipts of it at Detroit continue to increase."

Of wheat, the receipts at Detroit ranged from 4,285,000 bushels in 1875 to 12,045,000 bushels in 1879, declining to 6,357,000 in 1883; shipments for those years respectively being 3,907,000, 9,418,900 and 6,260,000 bushels. The special circumstances which caused receipts to be so large in 1879 were that the crop of that year was 35½ millions of bushels. The proportion of the whole crop coming "to Detroit was greater than now, there being fewer mills in the State of Michigan and less business direct to the seaboard. The speculative premium on futures says the secretary, also tended to bring "cash wheat" there. Red wheat is coming to that market, it seems, in growing quantity. This is attributed to the Wabash connection, which enters the red wheat territory and makes it tributary to Detroit. The Michigan Central brought in the largest quantity of wheat, nearly as much as the other six railways combined. The aggregate shipments were some seven per cent., or 447,000 bushels greater than last year. "Of the roads taking wheat away the Grand Trunk leads, as it has done for a number of years, but its figures fall far below those for 1882, while the Michigan Central has almost doubled its last year's work. The total amount taken away by rail falls short of the corresponding amount for 1882 by over 70,000 bushels, the difference and increase being made up by the lake shipments." Buffalo leads as the port to which the largest amount was shipped by lake, taking 2,381,000 bushels, about two-thirds of the entire lake shipments. It, however, falls behind the amount received from Detroit in 1882, while Oswego and Ogdensburg make large gains. They have received 437,000 and 301,000 bushels respectively. To Kingston and Montreal, 1,204,000 bushels were sent in 1880; but this year they had only 375,000, while other Canadian ports, i.e., Welland Canal ports, taking wheat for millers' use, got 193,741 bushels.

The comparative freightage by lake and by rail is interesting to notice. Detroit's total shipment of wheat by rail last year was 2,374,994 bushels and by lake 3,885,486. Of corn her receipts in 1883 being the largest ever known, 1,823,000 bushels, she shipped by rail, mainly Grand Trunk, 1,339,802 bushels and by lakes 232,825 bushels, most largely to Buffalo. Oats, too, were in large receipt, over a million and a half of bushels. Quite a change has taken place, we learn, in the direction from which barley is received in Detroit. "Formerly that cereal was obtained almost exclusively from Canada, but very little came from there during 1883. The reason for this is that Western barley can be laid down here much cheaper. No 3 barley from Wisconsin or Illinois, can be delivered here at 50c. per bu., while that grade costs 60c. per bushel at the place where it grows, and freight and duty advance the cost to about 76c. per bu." Canada barley used therefore declined in quantity compared with last year, to 346,000 bushels from

1,207,000, the total barley receipts for 1883 being 765,000 bushels as compared with 720,000 in 1882.

We cannot at present follow the other tables given in the report, but must notice that the steam and sail tonnage registered at Detroit in 1883, consisted of 315 vessels of 79,784 tons, of which, 145, of 38,000 tons were steamers. The total number of arrivals and clearances during the last season of navigation was 11,060 craft of 1,939,668 tons.

EFFICIENT AUDITING.

Recent disclosures in this city, in Montreal and other places show that the work of auditing is too often done in the most perfunctory manner. Complaisant auditing, which merely skims over the surface of accounts is a useless farce. It is misleading to the public and sometimes the cause of loss to those who ought to know, and think they do know just how the accounts, of which they are the guardians, ought to stand. An audit to be of any value should be done in the most thorough manner by one who is entirely competent to do the work he undertakes. The auditor should be a man of undoubted character, the strictest probity. If he possesses the qualities just named he should be allowed unmolested by those who employ him, the free exercise of his own judgment in matters pertaining to accounts; and if irregularities of any kind are discovered they ought to be promptly reported without regard to the fear or favor of any person interested. Such an audit is of practical value. During the next few weeks, many of our public companies will appoint their auditors, and we ask such companies to consider with care the subject we are discussing. The names we see attached to the reports of some public companies, unfortunately do not strengthen public confidence in the minds of the business community. It is to be feared that in some instances the auditor owes his position to a few friends on the board, rather than to his skill and knowledge of accounts.

The position of a public accountant, which in England is nearly on a level with the learned professions, is only now beginning to be recognized in the business centres of Ontario and Quebec. By looking over the list of auditors in this city, it will be found that the majority consists of persons who are not professional accountants, but who are occupied as book-keepers in other establishments. Without wishing to question the efficiency of many of these gentlemen, it would be better, that in the selection of auditors, preference should be given to those who devote their whole attention to public duties of this character, and have thus a public reputation to maintain. In institutions in which the capital is reckoned by hundreds of thousands of dollars, it is not an unusual thing for directors to show their economical propensities, not in reducing their own fees, but in cutting down the fees paid to their auditors, who, in a majority of cases are very inadequately remunerated, when the responsibility attaching to their duties is taken into account. The plea often assigned is that plenty of men can be got to undertake the duties at almost any price, and this