

WINTER RAIL ROUTES.

A recent letter to the *Halifax Chronicle*, signed "Merchant," complains of the "gross misuse" of the Intercolonial Railway by its present management, and declares that the "absurd freight rates charged us" (the people of Nova Scotia, we presume) "compared with those of other through Atlantic railways are simply ruinous to Halifax and the Maritime Provinces." The letter cites a circular, emanating from a Montreal house, which states as follows:—"December 2nd. FREIGHTS.—Navigation closed; the only outlet now is by rail, via Portland or Boston," thus ignoring the I. C. R. as a winter route to the Atlantic, and, what is worse, ignoring Halifax as a winter port, a slight to that city which we shall not attempt to defend. There is this much to be said on the subject, however; this jealous Haligonian forgets that the greater distance and the longer freight transport per Intercolonial Railway, compared with other rail routes to the seaboard, is a powerful factor in the problem of winter carriage from the West or from central Canada. Unless the Dominion Government is disposed, as the people of Halifax seem to expect, to carry freight over the Intercolonial at a loss to the whole country for the sake of obliging the Maritime Provinces and especially Halifax, we do not see how the geographical difficulty is to be got over. Business men, whether they are Canadian, American or British, will choose the most direct and the cheapest mode of shipment for their export.

FIRE INSURANCE ASSOCIATION (Limited). We have already mentioned that this company had become a competitor for fire risks in the Dominion, having made the required deposit at Ottawa. We now learn that the authorized capital of the Association is a million pounds sterling, say \$5,000,000, of which one half has been subscribed and one tenth paid up, in 100,000 shares of £1 sterling each. The new company was launched in London (England) under the authority of the same gentlemen as constitute the Board of Directors of the London and Lancashire Life Assurance Co., and under the management of a gentleman of known repute as an underwriter, Mr W. P. Clirehugh. So favorably was its prospectus received, that when the first issue of 50,000 shares was made, applications came in for no less than 130,000 shares. It has in consequence been resolved, we understand, to issue 50,000 remaining shares at a premium of £1 each, and to apply the premium realized to a reserve fund. The chief office for Canada of the Association will be in Montreal; and in the Dominion, as at Head office, the policy has been adopted of making the one Board of Directors serve for both Fire and Life business, since the directors of the Canada Branch of the company are the same well-known Montreal gentlemen who form the Board of the London & Lancashire Life, and the Manager for Canada, Mr. W. Robertson, is the same. A Toronto agent has been appointed in Mr. S. Bruce Harman. So promising a beginning is certainly a fair augury for the continued success of the Association.

—A mass meeting was held in Halifax a week or two ago, to consider the duty of the Dominion Government in respect of making that city the winter port of this country. The assemblage was large, influential and unanimous in its opinion that something should be done by the authorities at Ottawa to compel our exports to seek the seaboard by the Intercolonial Railway route. Promises by the Premier and by the Minister of Railways, before the last election, to the effect that something should be done in this direction if they were returned to power, were alleged as special reasons why the interests of Halifax should receive early and earnest attention from the Administration. The Chamber of Commerce in that city is, we understand, preparing a strong memorial on the subject, and a deputation which shall go to Ottawa to present it, is urged by the local press. Messrs Bremner and Dwyer are the nominees of one newspaper for that purpose. Says the *Chronicle*: The necessity of a delegation must be apparent to every citizen who has the interests of the movement at heart. To let the matter drop now, after having such a splendid meeting as that of Friday last, would be absurd. And we may be sure that if the movement is not vigorously pressed on the attention of the Government by a firm delegation, the agitation will end in a fizzle, and Halifax will be laughed at for all its trouble.

—The following statistics, referring to the season of navigation just closed, were submitted at the last meeting of the Montreal Harbor Board of Commissioners. The number of sea-going steamships which visited the port was 354, an increase of sixty-five over last year in number, and in tonnage 108,278 tons. Of sailing vessels there were 356, with a tonnage of 152,530, against 323 vessels and 139,506 tonnage last year. The revenue shows a proportionate increase, the receipts to the end of November being \$316,073, while for last year to that date they were \$257,013, an increase of \$59,060. Mention was made that the harbor engineer had been instructed to report upon the feasibility of Mr. Shearer's peninsula scheme, and an appropriation was made to cover the expense of the necessary soundings and borings for the purpose.

—The *London Economist* of 27th ult. states, with reference to Colonial railways, that Indian stocks are still very firm, and there has been a revival in the demand for Canadian securities. Grand Trunk Preferences, Midland of Canada Bonds, and St. Lawrence and Ottawa Bonds rising as much as 2 to 2½. Grand Trunk of Canada sold on 20th for 23½ to 23¾, and on the 26th at 24½ to 24¾c. Grand Trunk Third Preference on the 19th brought 45½ to 45¾, and on the 26th, 47½ to 47¾. Great Western of Canada bought 15¾ to 15¾c, and 15½ to 15¾.

—An agency of the Bank of Nova Scotia, was opened on the 6th instant in Moncton, N. B. in the building formerly occupied by the Bank of British North America. Mr E. H. Taylor, is the acting agent.

—The British Mortgage Loan Co of Stratford declares a half yearly dividend at the rate of 8 per cent per annum.

RIVAL FERRIES.—The Toronto Island ferry-men have reached the dignity of litigation in the Court of Chancery. Judgment was recently delivered by his Lordship V. C. Blake restraining John Hanlan and W. H. Cooper from continuing to run a ferry between the city and the West Point. The Plaintiff Turner claimed the exclusive right to run such ferries under an agreement made with the Gray family and the Hanlans, extending over a period of five years. It was not pretended by the plaintiff that this would prevent independent outside parties from running a ferry if they chose. The defendant Cooper claimed the right as third party; but for the plaintiff it was shown that he and Hanlan had been in partnership in running the ferry *Ada Alice* under the name of "Hanlan's Ferry," and that although the partnership had been dissolved, Cooper continued to run the same ferry, still using Hanlan's name. It was also contended that Cooper had full knowledge of the agreement made with Turner. The plaintiff asked also in the suit for damages, and on this point it was shown by the defendant's evidence that the ferry had not more than paid expenses, which were about \$10 per day, amounting for the fifty days during which the boat was run to an aggregate of \$500. This amount the plaintiff claimed had been improperly taken from his business. The court held, however, that under the circumstances no damages could be recovered, and the plaintiff had to be content with a decree restraining Cooper from running the ferry in future.

ONTARIO WOOLLEN MILLS.

Place.	Kind of goods.	Value annual product.	No. Sets
ALMONTE—			
Rosamond Woollen Co.	Tweeds.	\$300,000	12
Elliott & Sheriff	do	150,000	
Gilbert Cannon	Etoffes.	40,000	2
J. Baird & Co.	Tweeds.	40,000	2
T & T. Foley	Etoffes.	20,000	
ALTONA—			
Edwin Cliff	Cardigan Jackets.		1
ALLISTON—			
Geo. Upton	Flannels.	10,000	
Walker & Cunningham	Blankets.	10,000	
ANCASTER—			
Jonathan Ellis	Knit. g'ds	85,000	1
APPLETON—			
Teskey Bros	Tweeds.	30,000	2
ARNPRIOR—			
Doutigney & Houghton	Tweeds.	40,000	2
AYLMER—			
S. S. Clutton	Tweeds.		1
BELLEVEILLE—			
John Lazier	Tweeds.		2
Sylvester Ostrom			
BERLIN—			
Berlin Felt Boot Co.	Felt Boots.	40,000	
Henry Carr	Knit. g'ds.		
BLAIR—			
McNally, Clemens & Co	Yarns.		1
BLAKENY—			
Peter McDougall	Tweeds.	45,000	2
BRACEBRIDGE—			
Henry Bird	Yarns, etc.	20,000	1
BRANTFORD—			
W. Slingsby & Sons	Blankets.	40,000	
BRIDGEPORT—			
J. W. Farrand	Flannels.	20,000	