

FAST LINE—MR. GARNEAU'S OPINION.

HON. P. GARNEAU, of Quebec, has written to the Premier a practical letter on the fast steamship question. There has been so much humbug talked by politicians about this question in recent years that it is refreshing to read the views of a business man who speaks from the commercial standpoint.

The key-note of Mr. Garneau's view is struck in this sentence :

"In the first place, I am, as stated, in favor of steamers of at least 20-knots speed, so that Canada may avail herself of the great benefit of her geographical position, which gives her the advantage of a day's voyage (500 miles) less than New York. It would, in my opinion, be foolish to lose this very great advantage by using slower boats."

The sense of this is evident. It is the basis of the whole scheme. What on earth would be the use of Canada's pretending to talk "fast" line, if, as some people want, she went in for a "slow" line?

Now, as to the cost. Mr. Garneau feels, as we all feel, that a yearly subsidy of \$750,000 is a large item. But he points out that a fast Atlantic line is a necessary link in the chain of swift communication already established by Canada on the Pacific to Japan, China and Australia. Without the Atlantic service we cannot fully utilize the money spent on the other services. This is only common sense. Besides, the British Government will give a large subsidy itself to the Atlantic line, which, however, to obtain this, must be up in speed and equipment of vessels to the British requirements. As we don't pay any naval tax for the protection of our Atlantic and Pacific coasts by the Imperial fleets, the subsidy of \$750,000 is no more than a just discharge of this claim, while in addition we derive solid business advantages from having fast vessels.

Mr. Garneau, as a Quebec man, puts in a special plea for that city. Yet, it seems to us, he is very reasonable in his demands, not absolutely insisting on Quebec as the final terminal port, but stating the following requirement as an absolute necessity :

"I do think, however, that in the interest of the country the Government should insist that in consideration for this immense subsidy the steamers should be ready to sail from Quebec punctually at the hour fixed, so that business men may depend upon their letters reaching Liverpool or London with equal punctuality to, as well as shorter time than, those by the New York lines. This is not the case under present arrangements, as steamers are often delayed by fogs or tides between Montreal and Quebec, and to-day the bulk of European mail matter, even from Quebec, is sent via New York."

He also asks, fairly enough, that Quebec be not discriminated against either as to passenger or freight rates, and concludes in these words :

"I do not approve of the 17-knot service, though I quite appreciate the objection that Mr. Dobell raises to the small cargo space available in 20-knot boats. Perhaps it might be worth while for the Government to consider an alternative plan, to meet this objection, by putting on a ten-years' contract only two of the steamers, say like the Lucania and Campania, of 20 or 21, instead of 20 knots. And let the other two, say for five years, be 18-knot steamers of very large carrying capacity (I understand the North German Lloyds have just launched a steamer to carry 20,000 tons of freight.) This would probably be much cheaper to the Government than four 20-knot boats, and it would help the freight business and the export trade of the country. In this way two of the boats would be a day faster than the New York line, and the other two a few hours faster."

This is all practical, and contemplates speedy action of some kind, which is what the country desires on this or any other big question. Since the death of Sir John Macdonald, in 1891, Canada seems to have suffered from a sort of paralysis on all large issues. The politicians have been fumbling with nearly every large prob-

lem that came up. The new Government has a chance to show what it can do, and if it takes the advice of sensible business men like Mr. Garneau it will be wise.

STRENGTH IN WOOLENS.

Reports from the English markets indicate that there is likely to be an advance in woolens. Mr. Fisher, of John Fisher, Son & Co., says that advices from Huddersfield say that wool has gone up in price 1 farthing to 1d. per lb., according to quality. He says the expectations are that prices will experience a slight and gradual increase. The advance in the raw material of course means an advance also in the made-up goods. The advance will be felt more in worsted cloths than in woolen tweeds. As soon as the new year is entered on there is likely to be a more decided advance.

There has just been recorded an advance of 7½ per cent. due to strong demand in Europe and America.

JUST THE THING FOR BIOCYLISTS

Gault Bros. Co. are showing a cashmere untearable bicycle cloth suitable both for men and women. They are so confident regarding its quality that they invite the trade to see if they can tear it, when they see their travelers' samples.

FANCY SILKS.

In order to make room for new importations, Brophy, Cains & Co. are clearing the balance of their present stock of fancy silks.

A CHEAP BLOUSE.

W. R. Brock & Co. have just completed a line of blouses, which for cheapness is a surprise. It is of Japanese fibre crepe, tastefully made in light patterns, and could retail for 30c. or so.

FEATURES JUST NOW.

Embroidered Swiss handkerchiefs and colored border hemstitched are features at Wyld, Grasett & Darling's. Valenciennes laces, all widths, were opened December 1.

A DRIVE IN SERGES.

Lonsdale, Reid & Co. are offering a special drive for spring in 6-4 serges and venetians.

NEW GOODS FOR HOLIDAY TRADE.

S. Greenshields, Son & Co. report a full assortment of lace curtains and curtain nets in Nottingham, Scotch and Swiss goods; also chenille and tapestry curtains, cretonnes, art muslins and tapestry goods by the yard. Assortment now complete.

JOBS IN MILLINERY.

D. McCall & Co. are offering jobs in all lines. They report that the trade generally are taking advantage of the great snaps.

CLEARING MANTLINGS, ETC.

After December 1, Brophy, Cains & Co. will offer at clearing prices all lines, then in stock, of winter mantlings, jacketings and ulsterings.

HOLIDAY GOODS.

James Johnston & Co. have in stock full lines of the under-mentioned goods for the holiday trade, comprising: White Swiss embroidered handkerchiefs, fancy silk handkerchiefs, embroidered silk handkerchiefs; also white and cream brocades, fancy cashmere and silk mufflers, nice assortment of men's silk knot scarfs and derbys; also fine assortment of golf jerseys, Alexandra jackets, clouds, children's wool caps and hoods, tuques and sashes to match; also children's, ladies' and gents' wool mittens.