

—The report of a gentleman who has just returned from a business trip through that part of Ontario lying between Toronto and Chatham, Goderich and Brantford, is one of a very cheerful character. His observation tells him that "the factories, foundries and mills are busy, and the machine shops pretty sure to want more stock than they have got on hand." The stocks of merchandise in general stores, he finds, are not, as a rule, heavy, nor is there the same readiness to buy goods. "In metals and hardware, people are resolute to buy only a little at a time, and cannot be persuaded that any 'boom' is coming, although prices are firmer. The feeling is one of quiet confidence, and appearances are fair for a good winter business."

—We find in the *Trade Bulletin* a list in detail of shipments of phosphates from Montreal during the navigation season this year. The total quantity of apatite despatched from that port in the period under notice was 19,030 tons and 2,078 bags. It was carried in nine steamer loads and four ship loads to Liverpool; twenty-six steamers and four sailers took the article to London, and it formed part of the cargo of four steamers to Glasgow. Other ports to which it was despatched are Antwerp (ss. "Wandrahm" and "Baumwall") steamship "Kehrweider" to Hamburg, also to Belfast, Barrow and Bristol.

—It is understood that the Dominion Government has renewed its contract with the British American Bank Note Company for the production of its money obligations, such as notes and revenue and postage stamps. The company has turned out some handsome bills, and has, we believe, every facility for doing work well. Let us hope it will turn out a handsomer bill than the last Dominion 4. Also, that it will improve upon the present postal card, which is not attractive in design, nor yet unobjectionable in quality, and make the one-cent post stamp rather more distinct as well as more adhesive.

—Halifax papers are advertising some fifty or sixty lots and properties under sale for taxes. It seems that until 1884 the city had no lien on real estate for city taxes, but a new law was passed and with marked results—\$35,000 to \$45,000, or from 15 to 18 per cent. of the whole, was lost every year. The first year's experience under the new law has been the reduction of the loss to 1½ per cent., a result unsurpassed by any Canadian city. The credit of inaugurating and working out the new order of things is given to the present incumbent of the Mayor's office, Mr. J. C. Mackintosh.

—Physical geographies will have to be rewritten, and blue-noses will be looked for in Minnesota and Dakota instead of Nova Scotia. That province reports a continuance of mild weather, while the much vaunted Western States are blocked with snow. May flowers have been picked, and flower gardens are in bloom in Halifax at the end of November.

—A company is being formed to bridge the St. John river at Fredericton, where the new short Line Railway is to cross on its way to Salisbury or Moncton. The Dominion government is to be asked to contribute a quarter of a million dollars to the enterprise. A bridge of some kind or other is indispensable to connect the short line with the Intercolonial.

Correspondence.

THE WINTER PORT.

To the Editor of the *Monetary Times*:

SIR,—Your very able article of the 19th inst, evidently written from a western standpoint, on "Mails and freight for Europe," has attracted considerable attention in the Maritime Provinces where we are unable to coincide precisely with the views you have therein expressed. The subject is considered of great importance, not only in Halifax and St. John, but generally throughout the Maritime Provinces, and while it is largely commercial in character, its national aspect is not less important, and has been portrayed in your article.

The desirability of Canada establishing a fast mail service with England, and by the shortest route, is unquestioned. Fortunately, that route is within our own territory. You confess you do not understand why Portland should be made an Atlantic mail port for Canada, when Halifax is so much nearer Europe. The Government by striking the name of Portland out of the tenders and substituting St. John has confirmed your impressions as correct. If Louisbourg were made the chief Atlantic mail port of the Canadian Pacific, and being the longest rail route, yet proving to be the fastest mail line. Neither Halifax nor St. John would have just cause to complain. What we have protested against, (and the Government has acted upon the justice of our protest), is in proposing to subsidize a steamship line to a foreign port. When the service can be as well done through our own. The question may naturally be asked, Can the ports of St. John and Halifax furnish sufficient freight to enable the steamship line to accept the service with a reasonable subsidy? We believe they can, with outward freights at present, and unquestionably with both outward and inward freights, upon the completion of the "short line" railway in 1887 nearly year before the new service is required. You seem to have some doubts about the short line being able to compete with existing lines terminating at United States ports; and proving itself a great international line for the commerce of Canada, and that St. John and Halifax cannot expect western commerce will take a circuitous route for the mere pleasure of passing through them.

Let us examine the position from its purely commercial aspect first, and see how much the commerce of the west will be sacrificed in making Halifax and St. John its winter ports, instead of Portland, Maine. You gave the distance from Montreal to Portland by the "Grand Trunk" as 287 miles, against 463 miles to St. John by the "Short Line," the G. T. R. time tables give the former distance as 297 miles. Our latest information in St. John, based upon changes made and proposed in the Short Line route, makes the possible distance 420 miles, but taking the reduction already made as 15 miles from your figures, will make the distance 448 miles, which will be 151 miles in favour of Portland. As an offset to that we have the assurance that the Canadian Pacific Company is giving special attention to the grading and intends making it greatly superior to the "Grand Trunk," as a freight line. We find in the Atlantic route, the distance from Portland to Liverpool, (as per special report of Minister of Public Works 1885), usual sailing course 2,850 miles, St. John to Liverpool, 2,700, which gives but one mile, on the through route from Montreal to Liverpool in favour of Portland, and we believe on completion of the Short Line, the St. John through route will have nineteen miles in its favour.

The port of St. John has many special facilities to offer shipping; its sobriquet "The Liverpool of British North America" has been justly earned, being the fourth largest ship-owning port in the world, with an open harbor all the year round, and facilities for both dry and floating docks unsurpassed; with freights to offer at all times to the largest vessels. I have seen eight or ten large ocean

steamships loading in the harbor at same time. When the "Allan Line" first carried the mails to Portland, being unable to get return freights there, had to come to St. John to load, and continued doing so until sufficient Canadian freight, was received over the Grand Trunk.

It is perhaps needless for me further to dilate on the commercial aspect of the question. You say the future of Halifax and St. John is in any case assured, and the despondency which casts a gloom over their future is an enemy, which it is desirable above everything to dispel. The despondency you name is possibly the result of "hopes deferred." When we entered the Canadian Union, its ardent supporters, among whom the writer may be classed, recognized the geographical and other difficulties, but hoped that time would overcome them and cement our young Dominion. St. John then held the proud position of the "Commercial Queen" of the East, like your own "Queen City" holds in the West to-day, and our sister city of Halifax with her Imperial harbor knew no peer. But the building of the circuitous Intercolonial gave a blow to St. John that is yet felt. We were told to wait the opening up of the great North-West, which would do wonders for us down by the sea, and the completion of our great international highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific would be the realization of our brightest hopes. Not only the products of our vast interior but the commerce of the East would find an outlet through our ports, during the building of that great railway. We stood almost aghast, as we saw the credit of this young Dominion pledged for the successful completion of the mighty work. The tax gatherer came alike to all, while the returns from the vast expenditure dropped into the laps of our cities in the West, who guarded well the line, that there might be no deviation till it reached their own doors. What cared they then for the geographical position? It was "Canada for the Canadians." No branch lines must be permitted to connect with the States to divert our commerce. The Americans must have no part in this great Canadian highway. But what about our brethren by the sea, who have borne their full share of the burdens without returns. Is the grand national idea to be now dropped, as we near their borders? Is it only now that our friends in the West have discovered that the course of the movement of freight is independent of the will of the Government; the history of their canals tells a different tale; the advocates of the National Policy took different grounds.

One of the reasons given by the repeal party in Nova Scotia for desiring to be released from the Confederation, "is because the whole tendency of the Canadian system is to squander monies in the far West, while public works in the Provinces by the sea are neglected." It is not my intention to discuss this question upon party lines, nor yet from the standpoint of sectional selfishness, but rather on the broad platform of the general interests of our common country. We have the impression that the vast importance of our Maritime interests are not fully realized by our great interior Provinces. Lord Brassey in his new book, referring to the naval preparations of the Colonies, speaks of the elasticity of the resources which make Canada of great service to the Empire. The mercantile tonnage of the Dominion ranks third of all the nations of the world, and 87,000 sailors hailed from her ports.

I have an abiding faith in the future greatness of our Dominion, and believe the time is near at hand, when the Provinces of the East and West will be bound together, with "bands of commerce," that will cement our Dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and while we in the East will point with pleasure to the wheat fields and granaries of the West, they will feel proud of our busy seaports, and look upon our hardy seamen as the "bulwarks of our land."

GEO. ROBERTSON.

St. John, N. B., Nov. 27th, 1886.

MANITOULIN ISLAND.

To the Editor of the *Monetary Times*:

SIR,—As to the state of trade hereabout we would say that owing to the fact that farmers are holding on to their grain and pork, (in the hope of higher prices when work on the Sault Ste. Marie extension of the C. P. R. com-