

Our total trade with that country in 1885 amounted to \$861,879; namely, imports, \$337,785; exports, \$24,094. But in some former years we sent Holland much more than this. In 1882, for example, she took from us merchandise to the value of \$865,198, principally rye and peas; and in that year we purchased from her to the extent of \$248,048, making the total exchange \$618,241. Our trade with her colonies deserves mention, too; molasses, hides, salt, are among items which have reached our shores from the Dutch West Indies. Four British, one foreign and one Canadian vessel, whose total tonnage was 7,461 tons, entered our ports from Holland during 1885, and one vessel of 400 tons came to us from the Dutch East Indies.

It is the case that a very considerable trade is done by the United States with Holland, and there is reason to believe that Canadian products reach Amsterdam from American ports. A direct line between Amsterdam and New York exists in the steamers of the Netherlands-American Steam Navigation Co., while it is well-known that there are lines of vessels from Amsterdam and Rotterdam to all parts of the world. The Hollanders are known in Europe as an enterprising and thrifty class of merchants, and there appears no good reason why we should not make an effort to enlarge our relations with them. Should any of our readers desire to be placed in communication with the gentleman whose name we have mentioned, we have his address, and shall be happy to make it known by correspondence.

TOLL-GATES AND MARKET FEES.

At the conference between the City of Toronto and County of York authorities, on Friday last, the possible abolition of tolls, on the York roads, next June when the gate leases will expire, was mentioned. But it cannot be said that any binding promise to that effect was given. This year's council has not in fact decided on abolition, and it is not perfectly certain what next year's council may do. The object of the conference was presumably to ascertain whether the city would agree to relinquish market fees if the county would abolish tolls; and we must say that, if this was the object, the representatives of the county did not succeed in putting the message they had to deliver in a form which it was possible for the city either to accept or reject. One of the county representatives raised the question of the legality of the market fees, and threatened recourse to the courts to restrain the city from collecting them. He based this extraordinary threat on two grounds: first, that the market plot was granted as much for the benefit of the county as for that of the city; and secondly that in fact there is no market house.

These statements make it necessary to look at the conditions of the grant. We find, on examination, that the patent was recorded in the office of the Secretary and Registrar of the Province, on the 12th of October, 1803. The grant was made, "of

mere motion," in trust, of five acres and a half of land, "set apart by the executive government for a market place in the said County of York." The trustees were the Hon. Henry Alcock, Esq., Chief Justice, the Hon. Peter Russell, the Hon. Aeneas Shaw, and the Hon. John McGill, Esqs. The county of York is not mentioned as a beneficiary of this grant, and by no possible construction can it be made to appear as such. And it was not a condition of the grant that a market house should be built. The patent was drafted without any special reference to a market house, and was in the usual form of patents then granted to a person with the condition that he should build a dwelling house. It would seem that a grantee who got a lot on condition that he would build a dwelling house upon it, was required to be without a house of his own. Accordingly, this patent recited that none of the grantees had built or possessed a house in his own right. In such patents three years was given to build a dwelling house. In building a market house, the city went beyond the requirement of the patent, though it was only right and proper that it should do so. The allegation that there is no market house bears fitting kinship to the pretence that the grant of the market block was as much for the benefit of the county as for that of the town of York.

The threat of legal proceedings to restrain the city from collecting market fees can only be regarded as an ebullition of temper, as there does not exist the slightest ground on which to base such proceedings. The rational and businesslike course is for the county and the city to agree, the one to abolish tolls and the other market fees. If the county be prepared, as intimated, to abolish tolls, next June, the city is not likely to hesitate about abolishing market fees. But it is folly to threaten what cannot be accomplished, when the end sought can be reached by mutual agreement.

THE RAILWAY COMMISSION.

The evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the subject of a railway commission will probably prove as puzzling as it is contradictory. It runs in two main channels, each taking a different direction, with a few minor streams more or less eccentric. The main contention, as might have been foreseen, is over the question of discriminations between places. The towns at the extreme ends of railway systems are in favor of discrimination, while the intermediate places are against it. Ottawa, Toronto, and for some purposes, Montreal and Quebec are against discrimination between places; while Halifax and St. John are in favor of it. This is the general rule, but it is not without exceptions. Discrimination in favor of persons—the least defensible of all—finds but few advocates, the feeling against it being almost universal.

The sum of the matter is that each place gives expression to views which accord with its own interest, real or supposed. In this it is impossible to find any principle for the guidance of the legislature. But in "equal

rates for equal distances" there is a principle; and it is for those who contend against it to make out a strong case. No case can be made out to justify discrimination as between individuals. It is quite clear that this contention may as well be given up, at the outset. It rests entirely upon the assumption that wholesale dealers have a right to an abatement in proportion to the extent and value of their custom. If the transaction were between private individuals, the plea would be good; but a railway company is not a private individual, it is a public servant, bound to treat everyone, as far as possible, on equal terms. To contend otherwise would be to license every form of wrongdoing in the railway companies.

From the same quarter sometimes come advocacy of discrimination, in the case of east-bound freight; and argument against discrimination in the case of west-bound freight. In other words, there are people who act according to their supposed interest, and not in consonance with any justifiable principle. All this shows how much the evidence taken by the commission will require to be sifted, and how great is the need for some equitable rules for general application. A rate of freight, which could not be exceeded, seems to be an essential condition; when this is secured, deviations from it, in the way of reduction, might perhaps be allowable, in extreme cases, but never as between individuals. Should it not be permissible to carry Douglas pine from the Pacific coast to Halifax, at a less rate than when it is carried fifty miles? Would not the insisting on uniform rates, in this case, be in danger of making the long haul impossible? It is clear that we are here on dangerous ground. If discrimination is to be allowed at all it should not be capriciously exercised, but should be regulated as far as possible, by some well understood just rule.

Is it certain that these questions can be settled without some regard being paid to the geographical conditions of the confederation? Complaint is made that Ontario flour is taken to Halifax, at the same rate as is charged to Quebec city. The discrimination is not here made a calculation of railway profit; it may be taken to be part of what goes under the name of national policy. The system of discrimination, whatever be the motive, leads to endless complaints. Nova Scotia, while enjoying this advantage, objects that there is a discrimination, in up-bound freight, in favor of other places. No one ever mentions the advantages which discrimination confers on a place; while complaints are continuous of detected discriminations. All this shows that equal rates furnish the only safe guide, and that they should never be departed from unless for valid reasons. And the trouble is that if exceptions be allowed, where are they to stop? by what rule should they be controlled? A maximum rate furnishes a check; but it still leaves a wide latitude to discretion, while it puts only a feeble rein on caprice. The railway problem is, it must be confessed, one of great difficulty. But it must be boldly faced, and, if possible, equitably settled.