

Montreal Harbor Trust, he is, as Minister of Public Works, specially responsible for abatement of these abuses. Whether such abuses really exist we are not in a position either to affirm or deny, any more than we are to say whether the insinuations against Mr. Tarte in connection with the harbor expenditure in the east contain any just ground of complaint.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

For a long while, Newfoundland has suffered in the estimation of people outside her own borders, just as Canada used to suffer, because of prejudice or lack of knowledge. The great island colony was remote; it was isolated, and not easy to reach; besides it was thought rocky and barren, producing nothing to speak of but fish and of late years copper. The laying of Atlantic cables from its shores, however, brought it more into notice. Next, the idea of making it a railway bed in a novel rail and ocean short route from Canada to Europe. And now the island is found to possess, besides copper, great stores of iron, also of timber for making paper pulp, so that it must attract, and has already attracted the attention of scientists and capitalists.

A correspondent, in our issue of 3rd instant, told how the railway across the island and boat connection from Sydney had shortened the trip to Newfoundland. The Reid line of road from Placentia Junction to Port au Basque, which is 500 miles in length, pretty well bisects the Island, running first northerly then west to the Humber River, and finally, about south-west to the point near Cape Ray where connection is made by boat with Sydney, Cape Breton. There are likewise spurs or branches of the road; and, indeed, the extent of railway in Newfoundland now controlled by Mr. Reid, is something like 750 miles.

Respecting the wealth of the Island in timber and minerals, in the correspondence of the Montreal Gazette, dated 16th May, some particulars are given respecting the former, which are of immediate interest. There are, it appears, enormous areas covered with the best of timber for pulp making, and there exists a pulp factory on Black River, Placentia Bay, which is well managed and on a pretty extensive scale. But since the building of the railway was begun there have been found on the shores of Grand Lake, through which the railway passes, almost inexhaustible supplies of timber suited for pulp making. At that point it is intended to erect a pulp mill on such a large scale that a year will be required to complete it. There is a likelihood besides that extensive paper mills will be built thereabout, and so manufacture the pulp, instead of exporting it elsewhere.

It is some months since Newfoundland was visited by J. H. Collins, F.G.S., past president of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, a gentleman of experience and reputation, who has been years at the Rio Tinto mines of Spain. He lectured on Newfoundland in London during March this year, and his lecture has been published. There can hardly be a stronger proof of the impression he made than the fact that a company has since been formed in London to work a number of copper claims which Mr. Collins selected when upon his visit and has leased from the holders. These claims are expected to be worked during the summer and autumn of 1898. This gentleman characterizes Newfoundland as "one of the richest islands in the world; particularly so as regards copper, and perhaps iron. And he says of the Tilt Cove copper mine, first opened in 1864 and still working on a large scale: "Last year it produced over 70,000 tons of ore and at a profit of

£28,000 sterling. Its total production to date has been not less than 20,000 tons fine copper, worth a million sterling, besides some thousands of pounds worth of nickel ore."

Much nickel is associated with the copper, it appears. There are numerous deposits of chrome iron on the west coast; also sulphate of antimony and zinc blende. Furthermore, in the opinion of this gentleman, the island may yet prove to be rich in gold; indeed it has been stated by Mr. Howley of the Geological Department that "the ores of Tilt Cove have yielded as much as £10,000 worth of gold in a single year." This would mean, of course, in association with copper, but Mr. Collins mentions a number of places where gold has been found in quartz veins.

Perhaps the most convincing proof that Mr. Reid was well informed before he entered into his great contract with the Newfoundland Government is the revelation he has now made by opening up coal seams on Grand Lake. It is possible that the coal basin of St. George's Bay is the north-eastern extension of an important Nova Scotia coal measure. But the most important coal area on the island, is that situated at the north east end of the Grand Lake. Several good seams have been traced for miles. "One of them," Mr. Collins says, "shows six feet of excellent coal. The carboniferous area has been traced for eleven miles in length with an average width of four miles." Within the last few weeks Mr. Reid has opened the six feet seam and in a few days extracted 100 tons of coal of superior quality. He expects ere long to be able to supply the whole island.

As a copper-producing country, Newfoundland has great possibilities, since the demand for copper is increasing fast, the price of copper rising too, owing to the extension of the use of electricity as a motor power. Newfoundland will at last get its innings, for as a copper-producing country it stands high. It is stated that in addition to the company started in London with which Mr. Collins is connected—capital, £250,000—the "Tarsus Company," having its headquarters in Glasgow, is turning its attention to "Terra Nova." It has appointed an agent there, and sent out a mining expert with a staff of officials to test a number of copper locations which the company has leased. Some new iron mines are likely to be opened shortly too, on the north shore of Conception Bay. So that, on the whole, Newfoundland may be said to be "booming."

MERCHANTS BANK OF CANADA.

The present is the third year in succession that the annual reports of the Merchants Bank of Canada have referred to the pressure of banking competition in this country, and the effect it was having upon the profits of the business generally. It is only fair to say that this complaint was made just as freely when the bank's own net earnings were over 10 per cent. on the capital as when they were reduced to 7½ per cent. The reduction of earnings, it is to be remarked, is more pronounced in the year lately closed than in several previous years. Besides providing for bad and doubtful debts of the current year out of the year's earnings, however, something was deemed necessary to be done to provide for doubtful assets and securities, the accumulations of former years. For months the joint general manager and the inspectors have been revaluing the bank's assets. And the result of their enquiry is now found to be that the contingent fund of \$74,695 and \$400,000 of the Rest have been taken to meet these appropriations and adjustments, and the \$44,872 written off bank premises and furniture. These writings-off are not pleasant operations, doubtless, but they are found to