

MONTREAL GRAIN TRADE.

Toronto News: Canada is making a good fight of it for the grain traffic of the West. During the last two or three years Montreal has been making great strides as a grain shipping port, and New York newspapers are manifesting lively alarm. It is well to remember that there is a touch of politics in their anxiety. The state of New York is entering upon an interesting campaign. The Erie canal is badly in need of enlargement. Plans have been prepared whereby, at a cost of one hundred million dollars, the canal will be improved so as to permit the passage of thousand-ton barges. The question of authorizing this expenditure is to be submitted to the voters this autumn. The cities of New York and Buffalo are trying to convince the rural voters that it would be a good safe investment to spend a hundred million in cheapening freight rates on the all-water route between Chicago and New York. Lamentations over the decadence of New York at present have an electrifying sound. It may be added that the railways are fighting the canal project with all their strength.

Some of the canal promoters' arguments are interesting. What is actually happening is that grain is showing a tendency to desert the American Atlantic ports—except Portland—and to flow in greater volume to Montreal and the Gulf ports, New Orleans and Galveston. "It is stated," says the New York Journal of Commerce, "that Montreal is getting wheat from Chicago by way of the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk line at a rate of three cents per bushel, while New York rates are about 7c." This newspaper proceeds to give a detailed set of figures going to prove that an enlarged Erie canal grain could be carried from Buffalo to New York by steam barges, each towing three consort, for 8-10 of a cent a bushel. The cost per ton per mile would be .52 of a mill.

Meanwhile the figures which are being published show that Montreal has gained heavily in the matter of wheat exports, and is gaining. The Wall Street Journal examines the

grain trade during 1901 and 1902 of the six great American lines. These are the Baltimore & Ohio, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the Erie, the Lehigh, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania. In 1901 100,000 tons of grain were carried, 0.94 per cent of their total freight tonnage. In 1902 the same tonnage carried rather less than 0.90,000 tons of grain, or 0.51 per cent of their total freight tonnage. In some cases the shifting was quite startling. In 1901 no less than 11.5 per cent of the New York Central's tonnage was in grain. In 1902 the proportion had dropped to 7.1 per cent. The drop in the case of the Lehigh was from 10.8 to 7.5 per cent. "The grain tonnage carried by these great trunk lines in 1902 shows a decrease compared with 1901 of 3,761,201 tons, or practically 30 per cent," says the Wall Street Journal. "No statistics are available as yet to indicate how far this falling off has been continued in 1903," this newspaper continues, "but we are informed by traffic officials that the diversion of grain traffic from the trunk lines has never been so heavy as at the present time."

The next point of comparison instituted by this journal is in the wheat and corn exports from the various ports. We may first take the case of wheat exports for the seven months ending Aug. 1. The six American Atlantic ports show the following results:

	1901.	1902.
Baltimore	1,394,794	4,627,607
Boston	1,554,287	4,945,809
Newport News	174,488	2,514,733
New York	4,857,363	9,535,341
Philadelphia	794,872	4,790,209
Portland	1,446,664	564,474
Totals	13,514,018	36,381,474

The two Gulf ports made the following showing:

	1901.	1902.
Galveston	7,613,302	1,965,396
New Orleans	4,323,061	6,134,971
Totals	11,936,363	8,100,367

Puget Sound exports dropped from 8,015,361 to 3,000,878 bushels. Montreal was open for only three of these seven

months. From May 1 to Aug. 1, 1902, Montreal's wheat exports were 8,293,455. During the same period in 1903 they rose to 9,507,092 bushels. During the last few months Montreal was the leading wheat-shipping port of the continent, temporarily, at least.

Montreal is the only American Atlantic port to gain in significance. Portland has gained rapidly as a corn-shipping port. In the first seven months of 1902 she sent abroad less than 0.00,000 bushels. In the same period of this year her shipments were nearly four million bushels, and the movement is said to be increasing. All ports on the eastern seaboard of the continent have experienced heavy increases in corn export.

The commercial columns of the News a few days ago contained an analysis of the July grain trade, which fully bears out the contentions of the Wall Street Journal. During that month Montreal received 3,870,000 bushels of wheat, and exported 1,344,060 bushels and exported 892,000. Montreal also received 1,570,000 bushels of corn, as against New York's 2,253,000. She stood second to New York in corn receipts, Baltimore coming third with 588,000 bushels.

This is the encouraging way in which the lake and rail and all-water routes are working at present. The Wall Street Journal expressly attributes the result of our cheap routes. The transcontinental policy of the government should stimulate a line of traffic which has done so well. The perfecting of the Canada Atlantic route and its incorporation with the Intercolonial should send the volume of wheat traffic passing over it up from twenty to forty or fifty million bushels. At the same time we should aid an efficient all-rail route which would supplement the lake and R. I. route.

CALIFORNIA CITRUS CROP.

The Los Angeles Herald, which follows the California orange industry more closely than any other paper in California, makes a specialty of crop reports, corroborates previous reports of a very big coming crop. It says conservative estimates by railroad men,

after a visit to some of the largest orange groves in the southern part of the state, place next year's orange and lemon crop at 35,000 carloads. Some even predict as high as 40,000 carloads, or nearly twice the total yield of the season just ending.

Many of the young trees are bearing this year, while the older ones have almost doubt the fruit on them that was noticed a year ago this time.

"It is believed that when the season starts in there will be no holding back for bigger prices and this, provided there are plenty of cars, should result in one of the most successful orange seasons on record."

A. H. Naffziger says there are 30,000 carloads will cover the orange yield. "As to the handling of the crop, I have already had conferences with representatives of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe, and there need be no fear but the roads will be able to move the fruit on time. About 8,000 refrigerator cars were required to move the crop the past season, and I calculate that 10,000 will do the business next season. This means that 2,000 additional cars must be procured somewhere."

THE AUGUST FIRE LOSS.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada for the month of August, as compiled from the carefully kept record of "The Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin," shows a total of \$8,428,350. The following table shows the losses for the first eight months of the years 1901, 1902 and 1903.

	1901.	1902.
January	\$ 13,186,200	\$ 10,000,000
February	10,000,000	21,000,000
March	9,507,650	12,000,000
April	12,143,200	12,900,000
May	15,366,800	14,900,000
June	14,654,350	16,300,000
July	12,628,600	10,000,000
August	8,428,350	7,425,100
Total	\$106,032,300	\$104,559,600

Mrs. Pligh—I know you are a little triable and annoying at times, Jack; but if I had my time over again, I'd marry you just the same.
Mr. Pligh—I don't believe you would.—Pick-Me-Up.

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