Canadian Beef in England.

For the last few days, and especially on Saturday, a curious sight has been seen at the bottom of Mount Pleasant, opposite the Adelphi Hotel. There have been crowds around the wholesale provision shop of Mr. William Brittain, engaged in inspecting the cutting up of sides of prime beef, and afterwards in purchasing pieces for consumption. On inquiry it was found that Mr. Brittain had received by the Allan steamer "Caspian," which arrived in Liverpool last week, a very considerable consignment of fresh Canadian beef, which was being disposed of at the moderate prices of from 6d. to 7d. per pound for the prime part. This beef, amounting to twelve tons, formed part of a consignment from Canada, consisting otherwise of six tons of salt beef, one and a half tons of poultry (geese and turkeys,) and a half ton of mutton. The whole had been carefully packed in rye straw, which has the special quality of absorbing any moisture from the meat, and arrived in first-rate condition. The writer had an opportunity of testing a piece of sirloin, which was in all respects equal to ordinary English sirloin at eleven pence and one shilling per pound. The poultry consignment was forwarded to London, where it has realized good prices. It will be remembered that when Mr. Joseph Arch, at Leamington, stated that he had dined with one of his own farm labouring friends on first-rate beef at five cents, or two pence half-penny, per pound, his assertion was received with some amount of incredulity. It is clear, however, that if beef can be brought by rail from Ottawa to Portland, and thence to Liverpool, and can be sold in Liverpool at from sixpence to sevenpence per pound, that Mr. Arch was only speaking the truth. A reference to an Ottawa paper received by the last mail shows that the market price of beef was then 2¼ to 3d. per pound; of geese from 2s. to 2s. 6d. each, and of turkeys from 2s. 6d. to 3s. each; which proves beyond question that a man cannot starve in Canada, where the superfluity of the herds come to relieve our English markets. The packing of beef in this particular manner will, of course, only be available during the winter season, but the winter season happens to be that in which, through the extra cost of fuel, domestic economies become requisite just at the time when an extra consumption of meat is a necessity of healthy life. It is understood that the present shipment is to be followed by others on a larger scale. As to the meat itself, it is well known that careful housekeepers often hang up their meat at this season of the year, for a time as long as that occupied by an Atlantic voyage, to secure the tenderness which is so great a desideratum at English dinner tables. That the Canadian fresh beef is, at the same time, tender and sweet, can be proved by experiment. It is desirable that the attention of persons charged with the victualling of public institutions should be turned to this matter, in order that they may, if possible, make considerable arrangements for the receipt and disposal of this experimental consignment have been made by Mr. John Dyke, agent of the Ontario Government in Liverpool.—[Liverpool paper, 12th Feb.]

The Great Problem of Cheap Transportation.

Next to the currency and the tariff, which are conceded to be legitimate national questions, the most important subject which engages public attention is the cost of transportation between the Mississippi Valley and the Atlantic seaboard. In the Western States this is the overshadowing question, and in the local estimation of the people of New York it perhaps outranks either of the others, although here in New York we disconnect it from national legislation and regard it as a question of State policy.

In what we are about to say we wish to combine and co-ordinate the two points of view, and show how local New York policy bears on the larger question.

We will not stop to comment on the message of Mayor Havemeyer to the Common Council; for although he seems singularly misinformed, his errors are of no consequence as regards the broader view which we wish to present. What Mayor Havemeyer says bears only on our State policy. There is a pending question in this State as to the submission to the people for their ratification of a proposed amendment to the constitution for funding what remains of the canal debt in a forty-year loan, thereby releasing the canals from a heavy annual charge upon their revenues for the early extinguishment of that debt, and enabling the Legislature to reduce the tolls on the canals to so low a point as to make their navigation practically free. The opponents of this measure, led by the Chamber of Commerce of this city, allege that mere reduction of tolls is insufficient for cheapening transportation to the point requisite for arresting the diversion of business out of the State with which we are threatened, and that the only efficient measure is an enlargement of the locks and the bed of the Erie Canal by a general tax on the property of the State, creating a capacity to pass canal-boats of 600 tons burden, and thus enabling us to compete successfully with the enlarged Welland Canal which threatens to tap Western transportation at the lower end of Lake Erie and give the lion's share of our grain exports to Montreal and the River St. Lawrence. Between these competing views of State policy we have already expressed our views with sufficient distinctness and emphasis. We recur to the subject for the purpose of showing how this controverted point of State policy bears upon the larger question which has begun to be agitated in Congress. So far as regards that larger question the conflicting views of State policy are of no consequence, inasmuch as both parties to the local controversy aim at the same object of reducing freights and preventing a diversion of business out of this State to Canada.

It is worth noting that, from the New York point of view, this is not at all a question between our canals and the railroads, but between the New York canals and the canals of Canada. Canal transportation, even at the highest rates of tolls, has always been cheaper than transportation by the railways. If New York should suffer by diversion of business, it will be because the Canadian canals pass larger vessels and offer cheaper transportation than the canals of New York.

Now, our great railroad lines have as great an interest in preventing this diversion of business into Canada as the Erie Canal. If a thousand tons of grain at Chicago can reach Liverpool at smaller cost by way of the Welland Canal and Montreal than by the Erie Canal and New York or by the railroads and New York, it will be shipped by the Montreal route. Neither the Erie Canal nor the railroad, can prevent this except by underbidding the Canadian offers. It is plain therefore that the same motives will constantly operate upon the railway companies which are appealed to by both parties to our local New York controversy respecting the best means of reducing the cost of freight on our canals. The same Canadian facilities which are extorting from us, in one form or another, an abandonment of our former canal policy, and a reduction of freights, must operate with equal force upon the railroad companies, and with a like compulsory effect. If, as nobody disputes, the danger with which we are threatened from Canada is real, the railroads can no more afford to disregard it than the State of New York which owns the Erie Canal. And both are forced to meet it in the same way, that is, by a reduction of charges to the lowest possible point.

But the blind advocates of Congressional regulation overlook these cardinal facts on which the whole subject, so far as it is a practical and not a constitutional question, hinges. The great railroad lines are under the same irresistible compulsion which is operating with such tremendous force upon the canal policy of the State of New York, involving our citizens in a strenuous contest as to whether we shall adopt this or the other method of warding off an acknowledged danger. Both parties to this contest are constrained to admit that it is only by underbidding the Welland Canal, now in process of enlargement, that we can retain our business. The railroads must fight this same danger, which equally