

deemed satisfactory. Our next heading is "Manufactures," but the items are so numerous that we must put off their consideration until our next issue.

TOWAGE CHARGES.

The shipping interest is much indebted to Mr. Gianelli, the Italian Consul, for bringing before the Board of Trade the subject of the towage charges at this port. Mr. Gianelli's object is to procure by some means an established uniform tariff of rates by the tug boats. He points out that the Quebec tug boat owners have on several occasions combined to maintain excessive rates. Mr. Gianelli has taken up the subject, and has brought it before the Board of Trade, because he has ascertained that the Harbor Commissioners are of opinion that it would be inexpedient for them to interfere with private individuals in a difficult undertaking. Mr. Gianelli's theory is that there are far more tugs employed than are necessary, and that they spend a great deal of money in going to the Lower St. Lawrence as far as Fox River and the Gadbout to look for vessels, and that this arises from the great competition. Mr. Gianelli's remedy is to procure five first-class tug steamers, which he maintains could be obtained at a cost of \$30,000 each or \$150,000 in all, to perform the towage between Quebec and Montreal, the vessels to reach the former port under sail. Mr. Gianelli's proposition is that the Tug Boat Company should be subsidized out of funds raised by harbor dues to the extent of 20 cents per ton, and that in consideration of this subsidy they should charge moderate towage rates, which he suggests might be 40 cents per ton. He professes to have positive information that the towage charges are driving sailing vessels from the port, and he maintains that the effect of the adoption of his scheme would be that the number of such vessels would be doubled. Whether the scheme suggested by Mr. Gianelli is feasible or not, the subject is one of great importance to Montreal, and we are glad to notice that it was discussed by the Board of Trade, and that, on motion of Mr. J. H. Winn, it was resolved to invite the Harbor Commissioners to appoint an early conference with the Council of the Board of Trade to consider Mr. Gianelli's suggestions.

Since the above was in type we have seen a further correspondence in the *Gazette* on the subject, and we feel assured that there will be a concurrence of opinion in favor of an effort being made to secure moderate rates of towage. If the object cannot be attained through

the present tug boat owners, then inducements should be offered to a new company.

THE REFUNDING BILL AT WASHINGTON.

A most unfortunate controversy has taken place between Congress and the National Banks, owing to a measure, the practical effect of which was to raise a large compulsory loan from the banks at a rate of interest lower than what Government securities would command in the open market. It has been the usage in England, which has long been the principal money market in the world to offer loans to the public by tender, which ensures their being floated at a fair rate. The National Banks are compelled to deposit Government bonds to secure their circulation, and it appears that over two hundred millions of these bonds will mature during the current year. It would have been hardly fair under the circumstances to have offered the new bonds by public tender, as their price would have been governed by the demand which the National Banks would be compelled to make. The fairest way of settling the matter was that which the Banks were willing to agree to, viz., to take $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. bonds at par in substitution for those bearing 5 and 6 per cent. Congress, however, was determined, if possible, to exact the pound of flesh, and the Senate and House of Representatives have concurred in the bill which now awaits the President's sanction.

THE SAULT ST. MARIE BRANCH.

At last efforts are being made to secure the construction of this railroad, which is so indispensable to the Province of Quebec, but which, strange to relate, has received little, if any, countenance from the Quebec members of the Dominion Parliament, and is now chiefly promoted by Western influence. We have more than once pointed out the importance of obtaining a connection with the great grain-producing States of the Union, which would find Montreal their nearest shipping port. It had, we admit, appeared to us that the best mode of obtaining the desired connection would be by the Canada Central and Q. M. O. & O. Railway. It seems now far from improbable that the Ontario & Pacific Junction Railway, which is promoted by the Northern, Hamilton & North Western, Midland, and Whitby & Port Perry Railroads will receive substantial aid from the Ontario Government, and likewise from the Grand Trunk. The Ontario & Pacific Junction was to have made its connection with the main line

somewhere in the vicinity of Lake Nipissing, but it was then supposed to be a matter of certainty that the Canada Central would connect with the Sault, having a charter for that purpose. We infer from the recent action of the Western companies that this project has been abandoned, and, moreover, it is evident that great dissatisfaction exists at the result of the negotiations for establishing uniform rates.

We learn by our Western Exchanges, that there is said to be "a conflict between Eastern and Western interests," and that an important railway deputation has had a conference with the members of the Ontario Government. The various companies were represented and Mr. J. D. Edgar, the President of the Ontario and Pacific, was there in its interest. It seems that on the old board of the latter company the Hamilton & North Western and Northern were each represented by two directors, and the Whitby & Midland by two each, Mr. Edgar being looked on as neutral, and that a change has been made by which the Grand Trunk interest gets two directors in the room of two Western men, thus disturbing the equilibrium. Mr. Edgar defended the change on the ground that the new road required substantial assistance, which Mr. Cumberland had informed him could not be given by the Northern, advising him at the same time to seek assistance from the Grand Trunk.

It appears that some of the Northern directors, including its President, the Hon. Frank Smith, are much dissatisfied with the change, but the truth is that, as Mr. Edgar stated, "Mr. Cumberland was the man who held the proxies and put on and off directors." The road is managed by the English bondholders, who know perfectly well how to take care of themselves. The Ontario & Pacific Company have petitioned the Dominion Parliament for a charter to the Sault, and Mr. Edgar stated that he felt sure that their bill would have been carried through the committee, but that it was deferred, owing to the absence of Sir Charles Tupper. It is of course, as we have repeatedly urged, most important to Montreal that the Sault line should be built, and we only hope that the Province of Quebec will not suffer from the unaccountable apathy of its representatives in the Government and in Parliament.

BURNS.

Under the heading "Raking the Ashes," the *New York Chronicle* publishes, in pamphlet form, a record of fires and losses in the United States and Canada during the last five years. The amount of