

A Day at Sault Ste. Marie

BY THE EDITOR

FEW places have had such decided ups and downs as the town of Sault Ste. Marie. The people who have lived there for many years have seen many changes, and know what "booms" and "reactions" mean, having had some bitter experiences. During the whole of last winter and the summer following the great works which had made the place such a hive of industry were closed down and thousands of people left town. The windows of many houses were boarded up, and the sign, "To Let," was much in evidence. The outlook was discouraging and yet the people generally maintained a hopeful spirit, and very few failures were reported among the business establishments.

Now everything is changed. The works are running again, with about 60 per cent. of the employees engaged, and everybody seems to feel that, after all, Sault Ste. Marie has a bright future before it. It can scarcely be otherwise. The natural resources and advantages for building up a great industrial centre are right at hand, and with careful management success will be realized. The immense water power

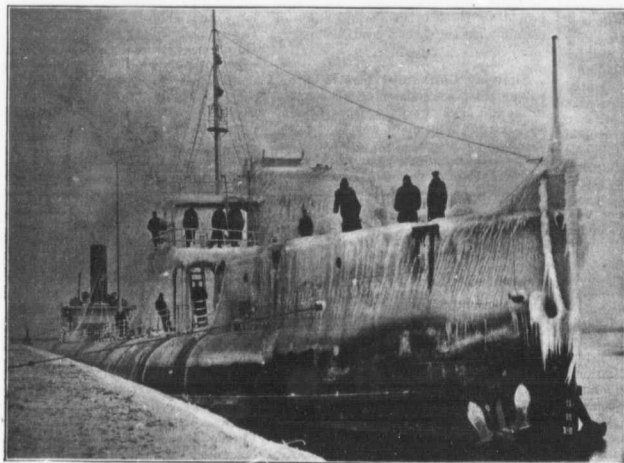
of the United States by a duty of seven dollars a ton, and in addition to this there is a bonus of six dollars from the Government for every ton of rails manufactured. If, with these advantages, it is found impossible to keep the steel plant running, we had better give up all hope of ever becoming a manufacturing country in iron and steel.

The company has a great supply of iron ore in the Helen mine conveniently located, but none of it has been smelted at the "Soo" as yet. All the metal used has thus far been brought in from Michigan, but the blast furnaces are being pushed forward rapidly, and it is expected that in a comparatively short time steel rails will be made from Canadian ore. Skilled workmen in these works get excellent wages, some of them averaging five and six dollars a day, and they deserve it, as the work is severe and the hours long.

One of the most interesting sights at Sault Ste. Marie is the continual procession of all kinds of vessels constantly passing through the locks, day and night, and during the season the hoarse bellow of the monsters of the

lakes may be heard as they pass, laden with the commerce of two nations. For some years vessels did not attempt to make their way through the tortuous channel of the St. Mary River, but the demands of trade had to be met, and now traffic goes on, by means of signal lights, all night long.

The prevailing type of boat is the long black barge, which usually lies low in the water, on account of being heavily laden. One such boat is 560 feet long, and is familiarly known as "The Yellow Kid." It carries an immense load of wheat. There are now about a hundred boats on the lakes between 400 and 500 feet long. The whaleback style of vessel, from which so much was expected, seems to have had its day, for no new ones are being built.



LAST TRIP OF THE SEASON.

which is available here, makes manufacturing comparatively cheap, and water transportation to both East and West is exceedingly convenient.

The promoters of the various industrial enterprises which are operating here, evidently expected them to be permanent, for the buildings are of the most massive and substantial character. To the average visitor the steel plant is probably the most interesting part of "the works." Regarded simply as a spectacle it is undoubtedly a great show, especially when viewed at night. It is a display of fireworks compared with which the performance at the Toronto Exhibition is tame. There is this difference, too. The pleasure of looking at the explosion of ordinary "fireworks" is to many people marred by the thought that hundreds of dollars are being wasted simply for the sake of producing a momentary sensation of astonishment and delight. Here, however, the spectacular features are only incidental. These great furnaces are not producing streams of molten metal simply for the purpose of filling the air with coruscating sparks of fire, but the utilitarian idea is first and foremost. It is all being done to produce the steel rail over which the commerce of the nation will pass.

First class rails are now being turned out at Sault Ste. Marie at the rate of three or four hundred tons per day, which will, no doubt, supply the demands of the home market for all the West. They are protected from competition from

The following statement will show the amount of goods carried through the Sault canals during the year 1903:

EAST BOUND.	
Copper	Net tons..... 112,877
Grain	Bushels..... 32,091,148
Building Stone.....	Net tons..... 31,300
Flour	Barrels..... 7,093,245
Iron Ore	Net tons..... 21,654,898
Iron, Pig	Net tons..... 26,122
Lumber	M. ft. B. M. 1,003,192
Silver Ore.....	Net tons.....
Wheat.....	Bushels..... 61,384,552
General Merchandise.....	Net tons..... 92,486
Passengers.....	Number..... 28,275
WEST BOUND.	
Coal, hard.....	Net tons..... 1,149,005
Coal, soft.....	Net tons..... 5,788,628
Flour.....	Barrels..... 135
Grain.....	Bushels..... 4,498
Manufactured Iron.....	Net tons..... 167,145
Salt.....	Barrels..... 4,882
General Merchandise.....	Net tons..... 567,353
Passengers.....	Number..... 26,900
Freight:	
East bound.....	Net tons..... 26,932,238
West bound.....	Net tons..... 7,742,199
Total Freight.....	Net tons..... 34,674,437
Vessel Passages.....	Number..... 18,506
Registered Tonnage.....	Net..... 27,736,444