

ESTABLISHED 1866.

THE MONETARY TIMES

AND TRADE REVIEW,

With which has been incorporated the INTERCOLONIAL JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, of Montreal, the TRADE REVIEW, of the same city (in 1870), and the TORONTO JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING.

SUBSCRIPTION—POST PAID.

CANADIAN SUBSCRIBERS,	-	\$2.00 PER YEAR.
BRITISH " "	-	10s. 6d. STER. PER YEAR
AMERICAN " "	-	\$2.00 U.S. CURRENCY.
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Book & Job Printing a Specialty.

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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, JAN. 13, 1888

THE SITUATION.

The Dominion Government has resolved to send a commissioner to the West Indies and the Argentine Republic, to examine into the prospect of establishing with these places more intimate trade relations. On the recommendation of the Board of Trade, of St. John, Mr. Simeon Jones, ex-M.P., has been appointed commissioner. The last attempt of this kind did not result favorably; the British West Indies not receiving with favor a suggestion which first came from one of the Islands. But there is no settled antagonism there to a definite agreement on the subject, and we cannot tell what it may be possible to accomplish, till the effort is made. The movement is in the right direction. The products of the West Indies and the Argentine Republic are totally dissimilar from ours; and there can be no doubt that our commerce with these places is capable of considerable expansion. No opportunity of increasing it should be lost; and all reasonable attempts to do so ought to be made. Mr. Jones will visit Montreal, Toronto and other cities, to gain information on the subject of his mission before he sets out.

The revenue of the Dominion keeps up well. In the first six months of the current fiscal year there was a net increase of \$312,633. There was a decrease in customs of \$125,970, which seems to show that imports have not increased, if they have not much diminished. The short harvest in Ontario will diminish the demand, but Manitoba will, in part, make up for it, and, on the whole, the difference will not be great. There was a falling off in the receipts from Public Works, including government railways, of \$266,635. The expenditure shows a decrease of \$282,234. The next half year may produce a different relative result; so that the whole year's operations may not be in keeping with the exhibit made at the end of the first half year.

No sooner is the international railway connection with the bridge at Sault Ste. Marie, completed than American freight begins to contribute to the traffic of the

Canadian Pacific. A great train, consisting of one hundred cars of flour, sent out from the Minneapolis mills, is a good start. Of this flour part was destined for Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts, and part for the English market. Each car carried one hundred and fifty barrels, making an aggregate of fifteen thousand. The Grand Trunk, too, will soon be in a position to share this traffic.

The money market, in the United States has continued, during the week, to be easy, there being an ample supply of loanable funds at comparatively low rates. There is not much speculative trading, and the demand for call loans is limited. Call loans and brokers' balances have been available at four to four and a half and five and a half to six per cent. First-class sixty or ninety days' bills have been taken at five and a half to six per cent., four months at six to six and a half, and good single named paper at six and a half to seven and a half. Foreign exchanges are considerably below the gold exporting point.

The argument in favor of Commercial Union, of which most is being made just now, is that "unrestricted reciprocity" would greatly benefit British investments in Canada. These investments are just as secure to-day as ever they have been; the interest is paid as regularly, the earnings are as great; the prospect was never better. We are told that the value of farm land has fallen in Canada. So it has in the United States, so it has in England; and the fall is not greater here than in the States. In some counties the Dominion Grangers, representatives of the farmers, when assembling in this city recently, denied that there was any general decline in the price of land, and no where was it much. The price of land affects mortgagees; but there has been no general decline of prices to sweep away margins in land, or to render them too small for safety. That is the general rule. Some English journals are said to be advocating commercial union on the ground that English investors in Canada would be benefitted by it. But nothing has occurred recently to hurt these investors. Some railways unfortunately do not bring the return they should; but this is nothing new, and it is, at least, doubtful, whether commercial union would mend matters. Would it not be as likely to put our railways in the power of their American rivals and allies?

There seems to be no longer any doubt that the Ottawa water is responsible for the typhoid fever prevalent in that city. The river above becomes contaminated as population presses on its banks. What is the remedy? To make the upper towns pump their sewage on the land? It is difficult to conceive of any other, and the cost which this remedy would impose stands in the way. In Toronto the worst water is that in the comparatively few wells that are allowed to remain. According to Dr. Ellis and Professor Ramsay Wright, it is unsafe to be used, even for rinsing vessels used for food. The quantity of sewage

that filters into the service pipe, in the bay, is not sufficient to affect the character of the water supplied to the city; a fact very comforting to water-drinkers. Mr. Frank Turner proposes to supply the district newly added to the west of the city, by erecting a new pumping house, at the Humber Bay, provided the water there be found pure, at a reasonable distance from the shore. What appears to be certain is, that the water of the Humber is poisoned by dye-stuffs, let into it, at Weston. Residents of the neighborhood state that one effect has been to poison all the fish in the river. A nuisance like this cannot be abated a moment too soon. A remedy would probably be found under the Fishery Act, if not elsewhere.

The Lake Marine stands in need of attention from the Legislature. If report lies not, there are owners of vessels who tempt fate, and do not scruple to risk human life in unseaworthy vessels. An "old lake captain," writes to the *Mail*, that the disasters of the last season have been great; the number of lives lost going into hundreds. Many of the vessels, it is added, were rotten and should not have been allowed to leave port; and the list is not yet exhausted. It is charged "that there are still owned, both in Canada and the United States, along the whole chain of the lakes, a phalanx of aged, rotten and patched-up old hulls, that should not be allowed to go into commission another season." If this be so, the inspectors should increase their vigilance. A little extra paint and oakum should not deceive them. But there is something that the inspection of the hull does not cover, namely, overloading. Still there must be means of guarding against it, and a little honest diligence would scarcely fail to discover them. Another cause of disaster is undermanning. The tackle is not always as good and reliable as it should be. The "Old Lake Captain" thinks the labor commission might enquire into the fact: and it seems to us that it might do so with great advantage.

In spite of the decision at Rome, tolerating the Knights of Labor, the Cardinal Archbishop of Quebec has issued a pastoral against the action of certain printers, members of the Order, who, at once, demand increased pay and diminished hours of labor; nine hours to the day. We do not see, in the action of the Cardinal, the repugnance to the attitude of Rome which some have discovered. All that was decided at Rome was that the Knights of Labor, as a society, should not come under the ban of the church. But that does not prevent every act of this society being dealt with on its merits, and this is what Cardinal Taschereau is charged with having done. His Vicar General denies that there is any connection between the pastoral and the strike, and says it was determined to issue it, before the strike took place. The French printers have, heretofore been paid less than the English; on the face of it this is an anomaly, but that there is, doubtless, some substantial reason on which the difference was, in part at least, founded. The