

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 18, 1893.

THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL.

The greatest work of the day, and one of the greatest engineering enterprises of recent years, has just been completed in England. We refer to the Manchester ship canal, which was formally opened on Dec. 7. The public opening will take place on New Year's day, and in this connection it is of special interest to Canadians to know that one of our vessels will be the first to enter the canal and lead the procession to Manchester. This honor falls to the Nova Scotia barque *Sophie Wilhelmine*, which vessel is now in waiting with a load of lumber.

It is eleven years since the movement to construct this great work took definite shape. The first step necessary was a charter, and this was secured after great difficulty, owing to the opposition of railway and Liverpool Jock interests. It is said that it cost the directors one and three quarter million dollars to get the charter passed by Parliament. In Canada, where charters are granted so freely, this will seem a remarkable statement, and it would seem to indicate the need of reform of some kind in the British legislative system, when such a statement can be made. The capital was secured in a variety of ways. Manchester and other Lancashire cities contributed largely and private investors purchased shares. A large number of shares were taken by co-operative and workingmen's societies. In 1887 the capital was assured and the contract was let to Thos. Walker. Lender Williams, the great English engineer, it may be stated here, was the projector of the scheme, and the engineer in charge. The expense of building the canal was enormous. Over 11,000 men were at work at one time, and the working plant alone cost nearly \$5,000,000. Mr. Walker, the original contractor died shortly after the organization of the work had been completed, and it was then taken up by the canal company. A point which will help to show the magnitude of the undertaking will be found in the statement that 228 miles of railway were laid to aid in the construction of the canal. Included in the construction plant were 170 locomotives, 6,500 cars, 100 dredges, etc.

The total length of the canal is 35½ miles. The fall from the water level at Manchester to the mouth at the Mersey is 60½ feet. There are four locks, each having a lift of something over fifteen feet. The walls are of concrete, except at the water line, where granite or limestone is laid, as a protection from rubbing by ships. The entire canal is practically one long dock. The canal has a width of 120 feet and a mean depth of 26 feet of water. The Manchester end for three and a half miles is 170 feet wide. One of the greatest feats in connection with the canal is the swinging aqueduct by which the Bridgewater canal is carried across the Manchester canal. The total cost of the great work is about \$75,000,000, of which the city of Manchester contributed about one-half. The city has a controlling

interest in the undertaking, and has several representatives on the directorate.

Like the construction of new railways in the Canadian West, new towns are springing up along the canal. Business was opened upon a portion of the canal some months ago, and an important town known as Saltport has since grown up, with regular lines of steamers running to home and foreign ports.

The influence of the canal when completed will be watched with interest. That it will be a paying investment is considered certain. Its terminus is the greatest manufacturing city in the world, and it penetrates the most densely populated portion of the kingdom. The population immediately tributary to the canal is counted by millions. It is said that one-fifth of the population of England are nearer to the canal than any other ocean port. The canal passes through the very heart of the industrial centre of England, with its millions of consumers. It will be used to bring in raw products for these great industries, food for the vast population concentrated in the district, and provide a means of shipping out the manufactures of the region. A great saving in freight charges and cost of handling will result, not only in the cost of transferring the enormous traffic to and from cars at Liverpool, but also in the lower freight rates by the canal, as compared with the railway rates.

Canadian trade with England should be stimulated by the completion of this great traffic highway. Ships with our products will then proceed direct to the heart of the most densely populated portion of the kingdom, saving railway freights and the transferring of goods from snips to cars. Take the case of Denmark, for instance, which is an active competitor with Canada in the British markets in cheese, butter and other products. Ships from Denmark and other countries of northwestern Europe would land at a North Sea port, and their products will still be subject to railway freight rates to reach interior centres in England, while Liverpool and the Manchester canal points are the natural ports for vessels from Canada. The opening of the canal will, therefore, increase our ability to compete in British markets, against certain foreign products, as well as against the English farmer.

MR. FOSTER MISREPRESENTED.

Hon. Mr. Foster, finance minister, writes THE COMMERCIAL in reply to an article which appeared in this journal, in our issue of November 27. In discussing the result of the Winnipeg election, THE COMMERCIAL intimated that Winnipeg had given a strong negative answer to the statements of Mr. Foster, that the West would be satisfied with a few minor reductions in the tariff. The portion of the article which Mr. Foster particularly objects to is contained in the following statement:

"Finance Minister Foster has returned East with the report that the West will be satisfied with a few minor reductions in the tariff. Winnipeg thunders NO to this assertion."

Mr. Foster says there is not a particle of truth in this statement. It was made, he says, during the contest in Winnipeg, as an election cry, and he did not suppose it would be seriously believed.

THE COMMERCIAL has no desire to misrepresent Mr. Foster in this matter. That this journal is not animated by any party bias against Mr. Foster or his colleagues, is well known to all our readers. We are not only willing, but anxious to correct any wrong impression which may be given through anything which may appear in this paper, in this as in any other matter. THE COMMERCIAL formed its opinion of Mr. Foster's intentions regarding the question of tariff reform, from interviews with the gentleman, published in eastern papers, and from telegraphic reports of statements alleged to have been made by him. If the finance minister has been misrepresented, it is not altogether the fault of THE COMMERCIAL. The opinion was formed honestly, and in fact no other opinion could have been arrived at, from reading some of these interviews. We did not notice that they had been repudiated by Mr. Foster, and therefore accepted them as genuine expressions of his views upon the question of tariff reform. We are glad now to know from Mr. Foster personally, that he repudiates the alleged interviews with him, published in the *Empire* and other journals, for such we would take the substance of his denial to mean. He does not tell THE COMMERCIAL exactly what his views are as to tariff reform in the West, but this we could hardly expect him to do. The proper time to do this will be when he introduces his tariff measure in Parliament. He states, however, that what he did say was quite different from what we were led to believe he had said. It is gratifying to have this much from Mr. Foster. THE COMMERCIAL will now await, more hopefully, the public presentation of his forthcoming tariff reform bill.

FURTHER UNITED STATES TARIFF CHANGES.

A large number of changes have already been announced in the original draft of the Wilson tariff bill. The date in which the bill is to go into effect, has been changed from March 1 to June 1. The changes announced in the duties are numerous. The most important one for Canada, so far made, is in lumber, which it is now proposed to make dutiable at the rate of 50 cents per 1,000 feet for planed on one side; \$1 per 1,000 feet planed on two sides, and \$1.50 when planed on two sides and tongued and grooved. Malt is advanced from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. Petroleum is to be admitted free from countries admitting similar products from the United States free of duty. Many more modifications may be made in the bill before it becomes law.

TARIFF REFORM ONLY.

A portion of the eastern press seems either intentionally or through ignorance to misunderstand the verdict returned by the people of Winnipeg in the late parliamentary election here. These papers talk about the school question as though it was the real issue in the contest. These journals should be informed that the school question had nothing whatever to do with the case. It was simply "not in it" at all. The tariff was the sole and only question at issue, and the verdict was a straight one for tariff reform. Mr. Martin no doubt