

The question of iron bridges, as compared with stone or a combination of the two, must be a very anxious one for the railway managers, and one which concerns the public very much. In the crevices of iron work small particles of water may be frozen, and in thawing cause an expansion, creating a crack which may lead to most serious results.

#### GREAT WESTERN AND GRAND TRUNK.

Of the visit of the President and two Directors of the Great Western Railway to Canada, the *Railway News* says: "They have failed upon every point of interest connected with the American allies." The *World* says: "Full as the history of deputations to the American Continent is of failures, there have been few so ignominious as the foiled mission of the Great Western of Canada Directors, who have just returned home. Colonel Grey and his two allies went forth brimful of confidence; they have come back without even the materials for piecing together a plausible tale to account for their great collapse. Failure met them on every side. The great Vanderbilt was haughty and disdainful, requiring them to sign, as essential to any arrangement, an agreement directly in the teeth of all they had led the shareholders to look for. The Great Western Directors have shared the proverbial fate of those who come to the ground by essaying to ride upon two stools. It only remains to be seen whether the rejected fusion with the Grand Trunk is now also past praying for. Now the Grand Trunk has secured its opening to Chicago." I find that at the adjourned half-yearly meeting the Directors succumbed to Mr. William Abbott's opposition, and agreed that Mr. J. S. Forbes, an eminent English railway manager, should act as arbitrator on all matters in dispute between the Grand Trunk and Great Western Companies. Mr. Abbott may have fallen into a trap; there are probably no matters of actual dispute. But what the Great Western shareholders understood, expected, and wanted, was, that there should be a working arrangement made on the basis of a division of the net receipts. Mr. Abbott stated that Sir Henry Tyler had said: "If you form a committee of reasonable and sensible men, with such an adviser as Mr. Forbes, I think I may promise you that we shall make very short work and prepare an equitable agreement." It will be a good thing accomplished if these two Companies, in which there is so much English capital invested, can come to a mutually beneficial arrangement, which cannot fail to also be of very great advantage to Canada generally. For some years the Great Western Railway has diverted Canadian-grown produce to American railways instead of it being sent by the St. Lawrence, Portland, or Halifax route to Europe, or through the longest distance of Canadian railway that it could be carried to the Eastern States. By which ever route it goes, the rates are the same, and the American lines have simply been fed at the expense of the Grand Trunk and Canada.

Whatever benefits the Grand Trunk, benefits Canada. I noticed this by the many wry faces when it was thought the headquarters of the Company would be removed to Toronto. The more traffic that can be sent over our Canadian railway the more hands will be employed to work it, the more articles will be consumed to maintain it, and the better facilities will be afforded for transport of man and merchandise. With the Chicago and Grand Trunk, the Grand Trunk Ontario line and the Great Western feeding the Eastern portion of the Grand Trunk system, new life would be infused all along the route from Toronto eastward, and a double track would then be a certainty from Montreal to Toronto. Instead of a long journey of 13 to 15 hours, there could be a time-table of about 11 hours. The shortening of time would attract more Americans through the country, and all who travel in the Dominion spend something, if they do not benefit it in any other way.

#### CHURCH DEBTS.

Churches in Montreal, with few exceptions, are burdened almost to death with mortgages. I have been so oppressed with the harm that is suffered on account of it, that it seemed worth while to propose that one half of them be sold to pay the debts on the other half. But this state of things is not peculiar to Montreal; it is a part of our general life in the Dominion. According to the *Toronto Evening Telegram*—which gives statistics in proof of the statement—the

Queen City of the West is just as badly burdened ecclesiastically as Montreal is. The Anglican Churches in Toronto number twenty-one, with a total indebtedness of \$75,500; there are ten Presbyterian Churches, with an aggregate debt of \$121,800; ten Methodist Churches rejoice in a burden of \$123,000; the six Baptists are entirely free from debt, but the other smaller bodies are heavily burdened. Debts may be a great blessing, and they may be a sign of spiritual expansion and enterprise, but I very much question whether it is either the one or the other. A story is told of an American, who, when last seen by a friend in San Francisco, was seemingly in rather low water. Subsequently, however, they met in New York, when the 'Frisco man wore all the outward and visible signs of prosperity. Warm congratulations on the altered appearance brought forth the quick response: "Yes; when I saw you in 'Frisco I owed \$800—only \$800; now I owe a million. Oh, yes, I am doing well." Such are the ways of the world when the flesh is being ministered unto; but the devil is in full force I am sure, when the Church resorts to the ways of the world to propagate the semblance of religion. Church debts are a burden and a shame to any Christian community, and the sooner we awake to this fact the better it will be for us all. Fewer churches, and all free from debt, would greatly add to the happiness and efficiency of the ministry as well as to the content and spiritual activity of church members.

DEAR SIR,—May I request you will do me the favour to point out any passage in the article written by me in the *SPECTATOR* of the 20th inst. in which I appear to you to have affirmed "that the State cannot take property from landlords when the interests of the people demand it"?

Yours very faithfully,

Saxon.

I certainly had the impression on reading "Saxon's" article that he would deem it morally impossible or wrong for the State to take property from landlords. The following paragraph seems to fully warrant the conclusion:—

"The landlords generally possess their lands by purchase, by grant from the Crown or by inheritance, and their absolute right to those lands must be acknowledged. To take from a man without his consent that which he lawfully possesses is to rob him of his rights even where full compensation is given. He would prefer keeping his land, but the taking thereof is a foregone conclusion, and rather than get nothing he accepts the value of it in money and suffers a wrong. For the purposes of railways, canals and the like, land has to be expropriated, but such furnishes a feeble parallel indeed to wholesale confiscation with what would be called remuneration. Tenants, in common with all men—except those under just sentence of death—have a right to live, and so have their landlords; but to vindicate the rights of one class of men—the tenants—by destroying the rights of another class of men—the landlords—is a proposal in which it is vain to seek for justice, wisdom or generosity."

#### A BRADSTREET JOURNAL.

It is evident that even the sphere of journalism is not free from the pernicious influences of Mercantile Agencies. There is a "Bradstreet Journal" abroad, and it has permitted a correspondent to make the following attack upon the three gentlemen appointed by the Court to prepare the last Consolidated Bank statement:—"It is stated that the report just adopted showed capital (originally \$3,471,000) all gone, and a deficiency of \$40,000; on a revaluation certain assets were worked up, resulting in the present figures." Even if this astounding statement can be verified, there is an odour of back-stair influence about it which suggests unwarrantable prying, or peeping through key-holes, or even bribery. But it is more than probable that it cannot be substantiated, and the question arises, is there any point where legitimate criticism ends and dastardly libel begins, as tried by the standard of intelligent public opinion. Honest men do not "work up" assets merely "to let down the poor shareholders as easy as possible," and the correspondents who crawl up back-stairs should be taught by some means that a wholesome regard for good character and truth is a lesson worth the learning.

Fortunately Mercantile Agencies have ceased to be any practical guide, even to the most ignorant among business men. Merchants and Bankers have learned to rate their customers just as the Public will judge the three men who valued the assets of the Consolidated Bank, that is, by their actual ability to fulfil their estimates in fact, and not by any mere reports of what they can do. EDITOR.