

if it did not obstruct the passage of vessels, would not be injurious to wheat or flour. The extent of the obstacles to navigation in Hudson's Bay and Straits and the length of the open season, are points upon which additional information is still wanting. Already the obstacles to navigation appear less formidable than they once did; and no one can say with certainty that what was not possible yesterday may not be possible to-morrow.

It is quite certain that the gentlemen who propose to build a railway from Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Churchill River have a heavy task on hand. In an engineering point of view, there are probably no insurmountable obstacles; but the country to be traversed is not an agricultural country and never can be, and the cost of construction would be enormous. To build a railway over such a region before the navigation of the waters on its eastern terminus by suitable steamers has been submitted to a thorough test, would seem to be premature. Surely common prudence suggests that such a test should be made before anything else is done. If the result be favorable, there would then be a physical basis to work upon. There is certainly no need for hurry. The great North-West bids fair some day to grow more grain than the Pacific Railway can carry. But even so, the St. Lawrence water route with its upper lake connections is not yet out of the list of competitors for the carrying business of the North-West.

Distance, on the Hudson Bay route, cannot be measured wholly in miles, time must come in as an element; and until we know the average time of the voyage during which the steamers must be worked, we cannot gauge the expense and get a sure basis of comparison with other routes. But now that attention has been turned to the subject by practical business men, we may expect to see a practical conclusion reached.

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT.

The assessment of different cities shows, as might be expected, very different rates of progress. Ottawa, which has perhaps felt the most extreme depression of any Ontario city, shows a tendency to recovery; the increase in the assessment of this year being \$427,640, out of a total of \$10,628,120. Kingston a little more than holds its own. Of the total assessed value of \$5,792,631, \$187,089 is an increase. Toronto shows an increase of \$2,126,436; but as this is on an amount of over fifty millions, it does not show a ratio very much greater than that of Ottawa. There is no certainty that uniformity of assessment obtains in different cities, or, in different wards, of the same city.

The assessment of different parts of a county differs very much from the real value; hence the necessity for equalization. Such difference of assessment frequently occurs in one city as compared with another, with the same city at different times, and in different parts of the same city, at the same time. Who can tell what was the effect of the shuffle of assessors in Toronto? The Toronto assessment has probably been unduly enlarged, as appeals may show. Ottawa values have been sufficiently unstable, for some years past, to puzzle the conscientious assessor. The attempt to couple a municipal census-taking with the assessment, in Toronto, is, as we predicted it would be, a conspicuous failure. The idea was that the decennial census put the population too low; the municipal census makes it much lower. The folly of expecting people to give the assessor the true population figures, though there is really no good reason, except prejudice and suspicion, why they should not, is now indisputable; for the assessor will always be looked upon with suspicion by a considerable portion of the population.

—*Le Canadien* calls on the ecclesiastical authorities to pronounce on the question of Sunday trains, admitting that it involves Sunday ferries and street cars; and thinks that, if necessary, the legislature would step in to give effect to the episcopal decision. Even in the Province of Quebec, that stage of civilization which is represented by the secularization of politics has been reached, as the failure of numerous attempts at reaction shows. When the States of the church were under the government of Pius IX., railway trains ran there on Sundays. This was a practical settling of the question. The Quebec government has settled the question by running Sunday trains, and refuses to re-open it.

MANUFACTURERS' NOTES.

What manufacturers do for a town, is illustrated in the following account of disbursements made for wages in Johnston, Pa. The sum total paid out to employees at the Gantier Steel Works to-day amounted to \$38,000, and at the Iowa Barb Wire Works some \$3,000. The amount distributed at the Woodvale Woollen Mill on the previous day was \$5,500, and the aggregate of cash set floating figures up to \$46,000. On Friday and Saturday of next week the employees at the Cambria Iron Works will receive their monthly pay, which will reach about \$100,000.

The Nova Scotia County of Lunenburg proposes to have a woollen mill. The stock has been subscribed. Queen's county is getting ready for a pulp mill, a company having been formed.

The following, according to an exchange, is the average scale of prices being paid this season in the Ottawa lumber districts: Hewers, \$40 to \$50; liners, \$30 to \$35; scorers, \$26 to \$30; log men, \$18 to \$24; general hands, \$15 to \$20; cooks, \$30 to \$35; foremen, \$45 to \$60.

A new industry is springing up in the United States. A new mill is building and nearly completed at Paterson, N.J., for the manufacture of embroideries, edgings, etc. Within a few years the making of these goods by power looms in Germany and Switzerland, has very largely increased their use and consumption on women's and children's wear. Previous to this all these embroideries and edgings were all hand made, mostly in France, Ireland and Scotland, and of course, though made by very cheap labor, were far above the present cost of the Hamburg goods, as they are called in the trade.

The Depauw Plate Glass Works at New Albany Ind., employ from 1500 to 2000 men. The capacity is 1,400,000 feet of polished plate glass per annum, 150,000 boxes of window glass and 30,000 gross of fruit jars. Though their product is so large, they cannot keep pace with their orders.

Messrs. Jas. Harris & Co., of the New Brunswick Foundry, Rolling Mill and Car Works, write us a reminder that their premises are not situated at Moncton, as a recent item stated, but at St. John.

A Pittsburg letter last week gave a list of the various blast furnaces in that city of smoke and soot. Now there comes a list of rolling mills and steel and iron works in that American Birmingham. They number forty-six, and their united capacity is 720,000 net tons of product per annum. The out-put of each establishment varies from the 1400 tons of Read & Shaw or the Crown Steel Works, to the 50,000 tons of the Alleghany & Monongahela Iron Works up to the enormous product of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, first opened in 1875, which made 125,000 tons ingots last year, the average output being thus 1600 tons. The first to open there were the Juniata & Sligo Iron Works, in 1824 and 1825 respectively, half a dozen others followed before ten years, but the largest number opened in any one year was six, in 1862, and eight more followed in the three succeeding years. Seven have opened since 1870. The Sparey Steel & Iron Co. is the last to open in 1881.

At the Yorkshire Engineering Works of Fowler (John) & Co., all the boilers of the engines here are made of steel, the flanged plates being made by hydraulic machinery, while at Philadelphia these plates are made by hand. Plates are made and blocked for rivets at one operation by hydraulic pressure. The boilers used in the works are all self-feeding, whereby one man can manage as many as eight boilers of the largest size. Five miles of steel rope per day for steam ploughs, and a hundred dozen of plough-shares per day is the average turn-out. In the foundry the furnace is in the centre of the shop, the metal can be tapped on each side, and