

Russia led the way in abolishing sugar bounties, and now it is said that Germany would favor the British demand for a general abolition of those which still continue to be paid, in other countries; but she is not likely to act alone; unless France and Austria go in for abolition, Germany will not act alone. In case abolition cannot be procured, will the British Parliament agree to some measure of retaliation, which the government seems ready to initiate? That things are tending in that direction, no one with his eyes open can doubt.

A preposterous seizure by Canadian authorities, is reported from Halifax, of ale, on board the American flag ship "Richmond." The seizure was made on the ground that the person who sold the ale did not hold a liquor license. Is it any business of a Canadian civil officer what Americans eat or drink on their own flag ship? There ought to be some means of preventing stupid intermeddling of this kind.

The C. P. R. company is completing the spur railway to Morris, with the object, as interpreted in Manitoba, of preventing the Red River Valley Railway road reaching the frontier. The friends of the latter assert that this object will not be attained. It is thought that the workmen on the two roads may get into a squabble.

#### THE LATEST HUDSON'S BAY EXPEDITION.

The resolution of the Canadian government not to send any more expeditions to Hudson's Bay was wisely taken. Lieutenant Gordon's last report contains all the information that is necessary about the navigation of the Straits and Bay of Hudson. The author does not confine himself to the three years' observations which came under his own experience; he also examined the records of one hundred and sixteen consecutive arrivals of the Hudson Bay Company's ships at York Factory. The average date of the arrival of these vessels was found to be September 4; the earliest arrival was August 6, in a year which is consequently conjectured to have been exceptionally favorable; against this early arrival was one on October 7, too late to make the return voyage. Lieutenant Gordon reasonably assumes that the company had a strong interest in getting its vessels into Hudson's Bay, at the earliest practicable date, as the detention in the ice all winter of a vessel throws the returns over a whole year, besides entailing undue wear and tear, and additional expense for the maintenance of the crew. Of the August arrivals, only thirteen were prior to the 20th of the month. These, it must be remembered, were all sailing vessels, over which steamers would have a decided advantage. Computed in time, Lieut. Gordon does not think that that advantage would count for more than a month. This would make August 4 the average date of arrival, by vessels propelled by steam. But as there has been in the past and is likely to be in the future, considerable fluctuation

in the date of the practical opening of this navigation, the first half of July is named as the date at which, under favor of steam, the straits may be considered navigable for purposes of commerce. If this date could be relied on as constant, this navigation would be of the greatest importance to the North-west. But, Lieut. Gordon concludes, from all the evidence, that nothing would be gained in point of time by sending a vessel into the Straits earlier than the 15th July. The navigation is open till the end of October, but can only be carried on at great risks after the 15th. On the whole the conclusion is that the ordinary season of navigation will be from the 15th July to the same date in October, "with a possibility of navigation from the 1st July to 1st November; but in the first half of July and, indeed, occasionally in the latter half there will always be delays, and later than 15th October the risks are so increased that the question of insurance would probably settle that date." This conclusion gives more than a month advantage to steam over sail, which, in general terms, Lieut. Gordon, speaks of as the limit; so that it is evident he has taken the most hopeful view of the possibilities of this navigation.

The current from Davis Straits flows west on the north shore of Hudson Straits, and east on the South side, having apparently made the sweep of the Hudson's Bay, for on the West coast there is a strong current from north to south. These currents prevent the ice moving with uniform speed, and cause it to whirl in every direction, "the heavier floe pieces, some of them approaching the size of small bergs, tearing through the pack, leaving a wake of clear water for a short distance in rear of them, which is almost immediately filled again, the ice rushing together and the smaller pieces crushed or lifted out of the water as the opposing lines meet." These currents, in the opinion of old navigators in these waters, make it desirable not to enter the Straits till the first week in July. Sailing vessels drift with the ice in the current; but, in this respect steamships would have the advantage. Though it is not true, as sometimes alleged, that this navigation has been free from serious disasters, an unusually large number of them does not appear to have been recorded. Captain Coats, who commanded vessels belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, from 1727 to 1751, had two vessels crushed in the ice, and another captain has recently had a similar experience.

It is unfortunately not true, as had been very confidently stated, that these waters were free from storms. At Port Maxwell, lat. 62°24' longitude 64°46', observation shows that a velocity of eighty miles an hour is sometimes reached. And the frequent fogs constitute a real peril to navigation. "It is," says Lieut. Gordon, "a formidable indictment against this channel to state that, on the average of twelve years, in the months of June, July, August and September, the foggy weather is one half of the whole." We may construct vessels to cope with ice, but no illuminator, which a vessel could carry, would be able to pierce these fogs. The electric light might occasionally be of use, but only to a

very limited extent. The fog is an obstruction against which man cannot fight; and here, in the whole season of navigation, it is present more than half the days. This is an obstacle in this navigation which must be counted with for all time to come; and its serious character cannot be denied. There is reason to fear that, from the nature of the case, rates of insurance, on these waters, must be exceptionally high; though it remains to be shown that the average of disasters is very exceptionally high. Exceptionally high it can scarcely help being; but the classification of these risks has yet to be made, and in the experimental period, underwriters will insist on a safe margin.

It cannot be said that the navigation of Hudson's Straits and Bay is of no value; but its precise value has yet to be determined. Ontario and Quebec would be scarcely less benefited by an open and unobstructed navigation in these waters than Manitoba and the North-West. The northern boundary of Ontario touches the southern part of Hudson's Bay, under the name of James' Bay; and that of Quebec probably goes as far. This bay is directly north of Toronto; and it would be easy to bridge the distance by means of a railway. If our faith in the commercial value of this water route were as robust as that of Manitoba and the North-West, Ontario would lose no time in making the connection; but we have no idea of wasting money in an extremely doubtful venture, and are quite willing to wait the result of the impetuosity of a younger community. The time has come when the question of railway connection between Manitoba and Hudson's Bay can reasonably be settled. All the evidence necessary to determine the value of the navigation is now before us. Let others interpret as to them seems best; for ourselves we prefer a waiting policy, which will give us the results of experience which, whatever be the outcome, will form a safe guide for Ontario and Quebec.

The fisheries of Hudson's Bay have been neglected, both by the Hudson's Bay Company and the fishermen of the Dominion. The company has not made a specialty of fishing or encouraging others to engage in it. The salmon trade of Ungava Bay is in its hands. A few Newfoundland schooners have tried this fishery, but the fact that they cannot get to the ground in time has been fatal to the enterprise. It is impossible for one of these vessels to get into Ungava Bay till August. Occasionally American fishing vessels winter in Hudson's Bay, for the purpose of taking advantage of the early fishery in the spring. The number of whalers which visit this bay, from New England, appears to be diminishing, as whales are getting scarce; the number, in the last recorded years, being only two or three, though in 1864 it was seventeen, and in 1860 ten. The whale, as is usual with it when closely pursued, is beginning to take refuge in inaccessible ice. Whalebone, used, when reduced to fine fibres, to stiffen heavy silks, brings a great deal of money; a single vessel occasionally netting \$25,000 in a season. The whale fishery is in need of regulation;