

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 29, 1892.

THE CANAL TOLLS.

The announcement on Monday that president Harrison had issued a proclamation putting a tax on Canadian commerce passing through the Sault canal, caused some surprise in a double sense. First, the announcement was not expected so soon after the decision of the Dominion government to abolish the discriminating tolls at the end of the season. But the most surprising feature of the president's proclamation is the rate of the toll mentioned therein. We were threatened with a tax of \$2 per ton on freights, and \$5 per passenger, but the bluster has simmered down to a tax of twenty cents per ton on freight. The proclamation is as follows:

"Whereas, the Government of the Dominion of Canada imposes a toll amounting to about 20 cents per ton on all freight passing through the Welland canal in transit to a portion of the United States and also a further toll on all vessels of the United States, and on all passengers in transit to a port of the United States, all of which tolls are without rebate; and

Whereas, the Government of the Dominion of Canada in accordance with an order-in-council of April 4th, 1892, refunds 18 cents per ton of the twenty cent toll at the Welland canal on wheat, Indian corn, peas, barley, rye, oats, flax seed and buckwheat upon condition that they are originally shipped for and carried to Montreal or some port east of Montreal for export, and that, if trans-shipped at an intermediate point, such trans-shipment is made within the Dominion of Canada, but allows no such, or any other rebate on said products, when shipped to a port of the United States, or when carried to Montreal for export if trans-shipped within the United States; and

Whereas, the Government of the Dominion of Canada by said system of rebate and otherwise, discriminates against the citizens of the United States in the use of said Welland canal, in violation of the provisions of Article 27 of the Treaty of Washington, concluded May 8, 1871; and

Whereas, said Welland canal is connected with the navigation of the great lakes and I am satisfied that the passage through it of cargoes in transit to ports of the United States is made difficult and burdensome by said discriminating system of rebate and otherwise, and is reciprocally unjust and unreasonable,

Now, therefore, I Benjamin Harrison, president of the United States of America, by virtue of the power to that end conferred upon me by said act of Congress, approved July 26th, 1892, do hereby direct that from and after Sept 1st, 1892, until further notice, a toll of twenty cents per ton be levied, collected and paid on all freight of whatever kind or description passing through the St. Mary's Falls canal in transit to any port of the Dominion of Canada, whether carried in vessels of the United States or of other nations; and to that extent I do hereby suspend from and after said date the right of free passage through said St. Mary's Falls canal of any and all cargoes, or portions of cargoes, in transit to Canadian ports."

The effect of the imposition of this moderate tax will not be a serious blow upon our lake commerce. It will of course place our lake shipping at some disadvantage, but only at such disadvantage as can be met by a slight reduction in freight rates. For instance, the new

canal tax will be equal to a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per bushel upon wheat, which is not a very great amount. Lake freight rates vary several cents per bushel, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cent is therefore only equal to a fluctuation in freight rates.

So far as the exportation of the wheat crop of Western Canada is concerned, it will not amount even to an increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per bushel tax on this wheat. A great deal of the Manitoba wheat crop shipped out by water goes to Buffalo, and it will therefore pass through the canal free. Anthracite coal for Manitoba, which is landed in large quantities at Fort William, will of course cost 20 cents per ton more, but this can be overcome by unloading coal for Manitoba at Duluth.

Altogether, we have not a great deal to complain of in the imposition of this tax. It will be observed that the president only applies the same principle that has been adopted by our government, in regard to the Welland canal. It is not Canadian shipping that is discriminated against, but Canadian ports. Traffic say from Fort William to Buffalo, will not be subject to the tax, whether carried by Canadian or United States shipping, while traffic going to a port in Eastern Canada, whether carried by Canadian or United States shipping, will be subject to the tax. On dry goods and freight of that kind, the tax of 20 cents per ton will never be felt.

What should Canada do under these circumstances? is the general question. Simply pay the toll and go on in our relations with the United States as though nothing had happened, is the reasonable answer. This mild enforcement of the retaliatory act passed by Congress, will not prove at all a very serious matter. We can pay it and not feel much the poorer thereby. In due time our own canal at the "Soo" will be completed, and thus the difficulty will be overcome. After next year we will have no use for the United States canal at the "Soo." Talk of retaliation is nonsensical. Let the United States have a monopoly of harsh measures of that class.

The question of the use of our canals by United States shipping is a matter for future consideration. At present it is altogether a one-sided arrangement. We give the United States the use of over seventy miles of canal in return for the use of one mile. The treaty of Washington, under which this arrangement regarding the canals was made, is only a skeleton of its former self. The provisions most favorable to Canada in the treaty have been abrogated at the instance of the United States. The whole question of the canals should now be re-adjusted on a new basis, with some show of regard for equality in the privileges granted by each country. We want little from the United States in the matter of canals, while they want a great deal from us. Simple reciprocity in the use of the canals is not fair to us, because our canals are immensely more valuable to the United States than their canals are to us. The United States should therefore be prepared to grant this country privileges in some other direction, to compensate for the inequality in the matter of canals. This is the way the question should be viewed, in any future negotiations regarding the canals.

THE MANITOBA FISHERIES.

Some time ago we heard a great deal about the depletion of fish in Manitoba waters, particularly in Lake Winnipeg. It was urged that restrictive measures were necessary to check the catching of fish for export, or the lake would be completely depleted in a very brief time. An alleged expert, named Wilmot, was sent from Ottawa to investigate the case, and his report was strongly in favor of certain changes in the regulations to restrict fishing. New regulations were introduced, some provisions of which were strongly opposed by *THE COMMERCIAL*. Recently the blue book giving the results of fishing during the season of 1891 has been published, and we see by it that the catch has been much larger than ever before. Again, information is coming in from Lake Winnipeg, to the effect that this season the catch will again be larger than ever. Fish are said to be exceedingly abundant, so much so that the fishing companies have not been able to handle the catch, and have been obliged to cease operations much sooner than they calculated upon, their cold storage space being all filled up.

The result of the Lake Winnipeg fishing operations this and last season indicates one of two things. Either there is no depletion of fish in Lake Winnipeg, and all the sensational talk on that score is disproved, or Wilmot's new regulations alleged to have been framed to restrict the catch of fish by the large companies, are really having the opposite effect of enabling the companies to increase their catch. Perhaps it would now be in order to send up some one to investigate the matter over again, to ascertain why it is that Wilmot's restrictive regulations have resulted in such an enormous increase in the catch of fish.

PROFITS ON DAMAGED WHEAT.

The same idea seems to prevail in Dakota that has been given considerable credence in Manitoba, regarding frosted wheat. It is the belief here among many farmers, and what is more surprising even among business men, to some extent, that grain dealers make more money upon damaged grain proportionately, than they do in handling choice grain. A North Dakota paper gives expression to this belief in the following words:

"Minneapolis commission and elevator men are buying North Dakota frosted wheat at from 25 to 40 cents a bushel and selling it at the highest Eastern market prices to the millers of the east, with the condition guaranteed. The agents and travelling men of these Minneapolis houses are industriously selling the frosted grain for good, hard wheat and getting big prices for it in the east, while the farmer gets little or nothing."

The Minneapolis Market Record replies to the Dakota paper as follows.

"That this wheat is sold for 'good, hard wheat by agents and travelling men of these Minneapolis houses,' or any one else, is a mistake. That wheat is sold only by sample in the east, or anywhere else, and it is bringing very low prices, so low indeed that not a house in this city that has bought that frosted wheat in the country has come out even on it. Many of these 'Minneapolis houses' that are alleged to be 'industriously selling the frosted grain for good, hard wheat and getting big prices for

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