

A comparison from year to year has probably no special value, but a remarkable fact starts before our eyes at the moment of examination, which is that the full third of the carrying trade of the port is done by a people who have no commerce with us—we mean the Swedes and Norwegians; they actually build their ships, and, after manning them, come across the ocean to do the carrier business which we ourselves are supposed to do. Of a total of 549 ships entered inwards, 182 are Scandinavian, and of this 182 only 47 came from ports under the flag of Sweden and Norway. On the other hand not a single ship left the port with cargo for the Scandinavian kingdom. It is altogether possible that our own shipmen are equally enterprising, but it is certainly desirable that a figured synopsis should be at our service, so that we should be aware of our progress or retrogression as a seafaring nation.

To leave for a moment the table authoritatively published, we wish our readers to take notice of the fact that almost the same number of vessels of the same nation have visited New Orleans; in fact it would seem that a certain kind of trade vibrates between the openings made by the two great water courses which drain the continent.

The total arrivals for the half-year of 1875 were 406,369 tons, with an average of 750 tons per bottom; of course the frequent steam traffic would tend towards a repetition of arrival of the same vessel, but our modern rapid transit is after all tantamount to a multiplication of tonnage. The important question to consider would probably be whether, as shipowners, we were the servants of others, or, as importers, we were paying an agiotage to the English for doing our buying and carrying.

The vessels which came from Britain were 335,018 tons, leaving only about 70,000 tons to represent our trade with the rest of the world.

The departures are still more remarkable; during the past half-year, out of 480,857 tons, all except 14,161 tons sailed for Great Britain. The diminution of traffic with *selling* countries has shown itself in our trade with France, Newfoundland and Portugal, and we notice a special falling off in our shipments to South America, the difference being 15 bottoms and 8,668 tons in measurement. This is an absolute loss in trade with a country from which we import almost entirely raw materials in exchange for our own, and from which, consequently, we would expect a profit free from the excise of the

middleman; it is, therefore, a trade to be carefully cultivated if we wish to do our own marketing.

The vessels for the whole year which visited Quebec were in tonnage (842,950) as in number (1050) considerably below the figures of the previous year. About 20 per cent. will give the variation.

The demand for lumber as a raw product is always indicated in the shipping list at Quebec; and as vessels arriving in ballast are generally supposed to have come in search of timber cargoes, we have in the diminution of these arrivals, amounting to 25 per cent., another proof of the general restriction prudentially imposed on trade by the mercantile community.

We think that a harbour so important as Quebec should have its statements very carefully made and also very fully digested; of the first we express no doubt, but, in the interests of the commerce of the St. Lawrence valley, we have as a duty, to ask that every possible statistical figure be given to guide us in our commercial legislation.

#### THE ONTARIO INSURANCE CONDITIONS.

We wish it distinctly understood that we are in favour of the simplification of the business of fire insurance by the adoption of uniform conditions, if such can be framed so as to protect the various interests involved, but we have to protest against the very imperfect and unjust *settlement* of the Ontario Commissioners, and the animus displayed in the whole of the proceedings concerning their preparations and proposed promulgation.

No legislation will bear the test of time unless it be framed solely for the good of the country as a whole; it is as unwise as it is useless to legislate specially for or against any class.

There is no doubt of the power of the Dominion Government to issue licenses authorizing insurance companies to transact business in all parts of the Dominion, consequently whatever rules, restrictions or conditions may be necessary for the regulation of the insurance business may properly be imposed by the Dominion Government, but when these requirements have been complied with, and the license issued, the company is empowered to transact its business, subject only to the conditions upon which its license is held, and not to any limitations or exactions of any inferior governments, whether they be provincial or civic. All the utterances of these inferior bodies, whether in the form of a Lieutenant-Gov-

ernor's proclamation, a provincial stamp act, or a municipal license and tax by-law are simply pretentious, and are powerless as against the Dominion License.

We deprecate interferences in insurance matters by any special act of even the Dominion Parliament, because that an insurance policy is a form of contract amply provided for by the laws governing contracts generally; because every person is free to choose as to whether he will enter into any of the various forms of contract presented to him, and because our large warehouses, manufactories and lumber yards cannot find in Canada companies sufficient to protect them.

But, if the Parliament of the Dominion do take up the matter, we trust they will consider it in its broadest light and provide such an act as will at once *settle* the alleged rights and exactions of the local powers; will provide every possible safeguard for the preservation of property from fire and from deterioration by neglect after a fire has occurred; against the temptation offered by over-insurance, as well as against fraud on the part of the claimant and over-reaching on the part of the companies; most particularly defining the meaning of the word agent, and determining whether an insurance agent differs from any other, in being confined in his powers by the authority vested in him by the company for whom he acts or assumes to act as agent.

This leads us to the further consideration of the fifth condition of the Ontario Commissioners, which assumes to provide that an insurance agent may, without express authority from his company, accept an abandonment of damaged property.

The good of the community demands that all possible care shall be taken of all the property of the people, and so justifies the idea of fire insurance being a contract of indemnity *for loss or damage by fire, at the time of the fire*, and not from the consequences of the neglect of the assured to use every possible means for the preservation of the property from further damage.

In the average fire as much damage is done by water as by fire, and salvage depends for its extent upon immediate action for the conservation of the property damaged, and a very little common sense will show that an expert at the trade can preserve a stock from further damage much more efficiently than an insurance agent can.

Yet those who are experienced in the adjustment of loss claims know that it is not a new idea for a sharp sort of a man