

THE SO-CALLED FRENCH CANADIAN EXODUS.

We are indebted to Mr. Brydges for the following statement of facts:—

The question of Emigration to Canada is naturally one of very considerable interest to the Grand Trunk Railway Company, and equally so is the question of the asserted exodus—as it has been called—of residents of Lower Canada, from this country to the United States. Feeling a great interest in this question, and having seen the remarks which have been made in the newspapers upon the subject, I thought it to be a matter of considerable importance to ascertain the actual facts in regard to the assumed departure of large numbers of Lower Canadians to the neighboring republic. I therefore on the 10th inst., addressed the following circular to all the Agents of this Company, at our Stations in Lower Canada, extending from Coteau, west of Montreal, to Quebec, Rivière du Loup, and as far as the Boundary line, near Island Pond,—as usual every Spring.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY OF CANADA.

Managing Director's Office,

MONTREAL, May 10, 1869.

Circular No. 132.

I wish to have from you, as soon as possible, a statement as to whether there has been during the present season, any unusual number of persons leaving your vicinity permanently for the United States. It has been stated that there has been, during the present season, a much larger emigration than usual from places in Lower Canada to the States.

I want to know how far your knowledge of this fact extends, as to whether there has been more people leaving this year than usual, and, if so, what is the cause that is producing the extraordinary exodus.

Give me, as far as possible, figures from your Returns, and show the number of Tickets sold this year, as compared with previous ones; and if you have any information in regard to the departure of people from your vicinity by any other means than the Railway, I shall be glad to know it.

Have you any reason to suppose that any of the people who are now going, or have been going, to the States, are simply going for the purpose of working during the Summer, or for any particular period, intending to return again to their homes in Canada?

I should like a reply to this Circular to be sent in as soon as ever possible.

C. J. BRYDGES.

Managing Director.

All the replies from places where a considerable population exists, state that every year for many years back, there has been a regular flow of people in the Spring, to the United States, for the purpose of working in Factories, Brick yards, &c., there, but the great majority of whom return in the Fall, with the proceeds of their earnings during the season. The replies to my circular state that Agents from different places in the States are in the habit every Winter of visiting certain portions of Lower Canada, and engaging for specified rates of wages, people to work in the Cotton Factories of New England, and the Brickyards in the neighborhood of Boston, and New York, and that these people so engaged, and so employed, invariably return to their homes, and remain in Canada during the winter, bringing with them the wages they have earned. This is the general effect of the replies which I have received.

I will now give the exceptions to those

exceptional, and likely to be a permanent depletion of the people of the country.

The agent at Coaticook reports: "nearly every train from the South (i. e. from the United States) brings back French Canadians, who are returning and settling down upon lands in this and the adjoining Townships."

The agent at Compton states that the stage line from Compton to Stanstead and Derby has not carried many passengers since the 1st of January, and is discontinued"—during the week in which he wrote.

The number of tickets sold at that station in 1869 was rather less than in 1868.

From one or two of the stations on the Rivière du Loup line, there are reports of about 20 families in all having left their homes to go west of Chicago.

From L'Islet the agent reports, since 1864, or during the last 5 years, about 30 families have left for the United States.

From St. Hyacinthe, the agent reports that there have been a larger number left this year than usual; but the total increase in the sales of his tickets, in 4 months and a half, only amounts to 1,300; and he puts down only a small proportion of that number as being anything more than the usual number of those who leave that vicinity every year for the purposes already mentioned, and who came back again in the Fall.

From one or two places the remark is made that a few (I cannot trace the number to amount in all to more than 300 or 400) have gone, because they have been informed it is the intention of the Government to make a draft upon the people for military purposes.

They appear to have been afraid that they were to be engaged in war, and to be drafted for that purpose, and have gone away in order to avoid such a contingency.

From our Bonaventure Street Station, in Montreal, the agent has made a very careful report, from which it would seem that from all sources, between the 1st of Jan. and the middle of May, there have been about 2,600 more tickets sold for places in the United States than was the case last year.

The great majority of this increase went by way of St. Johns, in the direction of New York and Boston, comparatively few having gone to the Western States; but of those who have gone to the Western States, the agent reports that considerable numbers are now returning by every train—finding their anticipations of profitable employment were not realized when they got there.

The agent also reports that the excess this year of those going to Boston and New York is on account of the greater demand for employment in those localities, and that the greater part of those that have gone, have expressed, their determination to return after working in the summer, and to bring back the proceeds of their labor.

He also states that he is informed by the travellers themselves, that they have been induced to go by agents who have gone through the parishes, making contracts to employ the people, at certain specified rates of wages, and which rate of pay is a good deal lower than the price which was in general use at the points at which they are engaged to work. Many of the young men who have gone to the States have been engaged at \$20 a month and their board. They bring back nearly the whole of the money which they receive in cash.

From St. Johns the agent reports that between the 1st of Jan. and 15th of May, about 800 people have taken tickets at that station for various points along the Vermont Central Railway. He states: "a large number of those have gone as usual for summer employment, and will return in the Fall of the year," but that there are also a good many of the 800 who have left to become permanent settlers in the United States, having taken their families and all their property with them."

This is the result of the replies to the enquiries which I have made. The agents at

each other, and their replies are all spontaneous, and I have no doubt whatever are a correct representation of the facts existing in their localities.

I gather, by a general examination of their replies, that there has been, this year, a departure of somewhere about 200 to 300 families by the Grand Trunk Railway from the whole of Lower Canada to the United States, who have no apparent intention of returning to their homes; that, in addition, there has been an excess to the usual emigration of people to work in factories and brickyards of probably not less than 3,000 persons, beyond those who have gone for similar purposes at various periods during this time of the year; and that it is the intention of nearly the whole, if not all, of those who have thus gone, to return during the Fall, bringing with them the products of their industry for the time they have been away. It also further shows, that of those who have gone to the Western States, intending permanently to settle there, a considerable number have already returned, and that every train is bringing back more, owing to those who have gone not finding their expectations realized. My object of course in making these enquiries has been simply to ascertain the facts.

I think this careful abstract of the replies which I have received to my circular, proves that the statements which have appeared in many newspapers in regard to the "exodus" of Lower Canadians to the United States have not been justified by the actual facts. Of course I can only speak of the movement of people by railway; but I think it will be admitted that not many, from the 1st of January to the middle of May, could have left except by using the Grand Trunk Railway.

C. J. BRYDGES.

Managing Director Grand Trunk Railway.

Montreal, May 28th, 1869.

GRAIN TRAFFIC OF THE WEST.

THE merchants of St. Louis are at the present time, moment, agitated deeply on the question of transporting produce to Europe, by the Mississippi River and the Gulf. It is not a new subject with them; but has been revived by the special exertions of a Company, who are determined to re-open the New Orleans route, whatever expenditure of time and money may be needed. They are rejoicing over the fact that on the 18th of May, Dubuque wheat was landed at Liverpool, via St. Louis and New Orleans, having been carried across the ocean by the barque *John Geddes* in 26 days. The cost per bushel was less than 40c., and other cargoes have been made for a less sum; if shipped via Chicago and the lakes to New York, and thence to Liverpool, would have been 60c. It is also claimed, that the wheat got earlier to the market, than it would have done by the New York route.

Nevertheless, we have no reason to believe that the Mississippi route is destined to take from the Lakes, the traffic in western grain. Had the New Orleans route been the natural one, it would have been adopted long ere now to a much greater extent. It is possible, that in the early part of the season navigation being open earlier, single cargoes of grain can be sent by New Orleans to advantage; but it does not by any means follow, that the route would be preferable during the remainder of the season. Coolness is a necessity in the carriage of grain. At the present time, when summer on the lakes has hardly commenced, the Mississippi has nearly arrived at its hottest temperature.

It is a certainty, moreover, that the grain, as well as other traffic, will seek New York, on account of the great commercial houses established there.

It is New York capital that moves the western crops; and although there might be a saving at one season of the year in carrying grain by New Orleans, a New York merchant would prefer to have it pass through his own hands, in order to control it during transit, and to have power to change its destination should it be desirable to do so.

There is great competition for the Western grain traffic, from the belief that it will grow enormous in the future; but there is some reason to doubt whether the shipment eastward will become much greater than it is at present. It is inevitable that the West shall at no distant day produce for itself many of the articles, which are now brought from Europe and the Eastern States, and as a consequence consume its produce within its own bounds. The very distance of the very far-west from the Atlantic sea-board, will act as a barrier against the great enlargement of the present traffic. It is well to bear in mind, speaking of the construction of canals and railways, that a period will arrive when the progress of the Western grain trade will become comparatively slight, and the existing highways suffice for its bulk.—*Tribune*