

opening of navigation to September 10 1884, compared with the corresponding period last year:—

	1884.	1883.
Wheat, bus.....	2,302,079	3,182,900
Corn.....	1,693,850	2,823,027
Peas.....	516,677	680,659
Oats.....	199,745	125,131
Barley.....	11,418	72,940
Rye.....	138,447	114,135
Total.....	4,862,216	6,998,702

The increase in our through grain traffic, which occurred immediately after the reduction of the Welland canal tolls, from 20c to 10c per 2,000 lbs, appears to have raised hopes that were too soon doomed to disappointment; and, in sooth, the free canals of the United States are not without ample cause for complaint in the same direction, their traffic having fallen off 225,000 tons during last month, as compared with the corresponding month in 1883. The following important admissions of the *New York Commercial Bulletin*, of September 12, are very significant: "The season has been an exceptionally unfavorable one on the State canals; and, notwithstanding the fact that tolls are no longer levied on merchandise passing either way, the business during the past month was even less than it was during the same month two years ago, when the toll system was in operation. This does not bear out the once popular theory that free canals would necessarily augment the volume of canal trade." The grain trade has of late undergone some extraordinary changes, and it does not appear that we have witnessed the last of them, as we notice that the shipments of wheat from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, since the first of September, have exceeded those from New York, Boston and Montreal, the combined exports from three Southern ports for week ending September 6 being 1,216,445 bus., and from the three northern ports 1,010,313 bus., showing 206,000 bus., in favor of the former. Another no less striking feature in the situation is that the canal traffic is being rapidly superseded by rail, and it seems that, it matters not how free the canals are, the railroads are bound to do the bulk of the carrying business. By the St. Lawrence route, however, very little grain is coming forward, either by rail or canal, and our steamship and transportation companies are sadly in want of freight. Who ever heard of ocean freights at this season of the year at 6d and 1s to Liverpool before, when the rates between now and the close of navigation usually ranged be-

tween 3s 6d and 5s per quarter, and have gone as high as 5s 6d and 6s? To demonstrate how badly this port is being left behind in regard to the through grain trade from the West we may mention that its shipments of wheat for the two weeks ending September 10th were only 270,341 bushels against 545,526 bushels during the corresponding fortnight of 1883, being a decrease of 275,185. If we take the five American ports on the Atlantic sea board for the same period, the exports of wheat will be found to have aggregated 4,722,332 bus. against 2,225,791 bus. last year, or an increase of 2,496,541 bus. In other words, whilst the exports from the Atlantic ports of the United States have increased over 100 per cent during the past two weeks, as compared with the same time last year, those from Canada have decreased more than one-half. This is an ugly showing, but it is true, and if any thing can be done to stimulate this important branch of our export trade it should be effected at once, as the close of navigation will be upon us in about two months.

THE WEST INDIA QUESTION.

If we may judge from the tone of the Ministerial press in Canada, and from the utterances of the representatives of the British West India Colonies, at their recent interview with the Earl of Derby, there is reason to feel serious alarm as to the outcome of the negotiations, which have been already opened with the High Commissioners in London, and which are to be carried on by Mr. Solomon of Jamaica with the Dominion Government. One important fact seems to be established beyond doubt, which is that the cultivation of the sugar cane can no longer be carried on except at a ruinous loss. It is at least open to doubt whether the West India planters have not exaggerated the effect of the bounty allowed by foreign Governments on the exportation of beet sugar. Theoretically the bounty system is not open to objection, and is in accordance with the practice of our Government and that of the United States. It is intended simply as a refund of duties levied in the form of an excise tax on the sugar extracted from the beet. It has been found by practical experience that the bounty obtained by an exporter is invariably much more than the original payment. It would of course be practicable, by the imposition of countervailing duties, a course adopted in Canada, to check the importation of the foreign beet sugars, but Great Britain will certainly not adopt such a policy.

A much more serious question for consideration is whether sugar can be produced as cheaply from the cane as from the beet, or, to put the case more plainly, will the total produce of the quantity of sugar canes that will yield a ton of sugar be equal in value to a crop of beets that will yield a similar quantity. Great improvements have been made by the aid of chemical science in the utilization of what we may term the offal of the beet, and we have even heard that so profitable is this offal, that it equals the value of the sugar. If from any cause it should be found impossible for the cultivators of the sugar cane to compete with those of the beet, it may well be doubted whether any of the remedies which have been proposed would be efficacious. It ought moreover to inspire great reluctance on the part of the Canadian people to unite their destinies with those of the producers of an article of commerce who are at present at all events, by their own admission, irretrievably ruined.

The favorite scheme of the West India planters is to obtain reciprocal trade arrangements with the United States, and Canadian Protectionists who were but a few days ago anxious to obtain reciprocity with Spain or the Spanish Colonies are now advocating reciprocity with the West Indies. This, however, is not what the sugar planters desire. They are well aware that while free admission to the markets of fifty millions of people would be a great boon, similar admission to the market of less than five millions would be of little practical utility. Any scheme of reciprocity would be surrounded with difficulties, both in the United States and Canada. Both countries have adopted a protective policy and even the tariff reformers in the United States would refuse to admit the sugar of foreign countries to compete with that of their own refiners. The Canadian tariff has been framed in regard to sugar expressly to encourage the refineries, as well as the cultivation of beet. Is it seriously proposed to abandon the policy which has been deliberately adopted? Under the caption of Canada and British Guiana, we find in a contemporary the views of Mr. Edwin McLeod, who states a number of facts, all which have been repeatedly cited in this journal years ago, when we had occasion to criticise the views of Mr. Dustan, who wrote on behalf of the refiners. Mr. McLeod gives it as his opinion that "our sugar duties at present are decidedly inimical to the trade of Demerara, and believes that the first solution of the difficulty will be to fix the tariff so that the sugars manu-