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**THE MONETARY TIMES,
AND TRADE REVIEW.**

TORONTO. CAN., FRIDAY, SEPT. 22, 1871.

IMMIGRATION CONFERENCE AND IMMIGRATION LITERATURE.

A conference of delegates representing several provinces and the Dominion, met at Ottawa, a few days ago, to devise means of increasing the stream of immigration which flows into the Dominion. Manitoba was represented, as it deserved to be, for after provision shall have been made for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, immigration will become the question of questions in the north-west. A railroad some two thousand miles in length will depend for its success upon a future population; a population of which the distribution will depend on the railroad. Without the latter there can be no continuous settlements, and without such settlements the railroad could not be a success. In the north-west we have something new to offer to immigrants—we have there a full set-off to the attractions of the prairies of the Western States. But it will be necessary to circulate full and accurate descriptions of the character of the country, the nature of the climate, productions, animals, and other particulars which intending immigrants would naturally seek.

Our emigration literature is, for the most

part, below par. Much of it looks as if it were the work of mechanical clerks in government departments. Sometimes much space is consumed by comparisons between the productiveness of the soil of New York State, and of the better parts of Canada. The result shows greatly in favor of the latter; but this is not the kind of information that is required. Immigrants do not go to the State of New York in search of land; they go to the west, and if any comparison should be made, it should be between the best provinces of Canada, and those Western States and territories which absorb the largest number of immigrants. Besides, it should be remembered that the immigrants who remain in the Atlantic States are chiefly artificers, and that they there find an extended field of labor. The opportunities which Canada offers for this class of immigrants should be discussed on their merits. If the field is more limited, taxation is much lighter; and almost any manufacture produced in Canada can be sold at a price which renders American competition impossible.

Nor does it follow that comparative wages—that is, wages tested by their purchasing power—are less in Canada than in the United States. Mr. Larned, in his report on reciprocity, tried to prove that they are; and though he did not succeed, superficial readers may conclude that he did. The fact of his making the attempt, shows that Americans make use of every side they can control, to set in a favorable light the comparative advantages of their country as a home for immigrants. Nothing is so calculated to decide a large class of immigrants in the choice of a new home as the rate of wages; and they cannot always be expected to stop to enquire into the relative purchasing power of wages in the countries they compare. Mr. Larned undertook to do this; and considering the way in which he executed his work, it would have been well if his official effort had been met by an authoritative reply. Even if we took his figures as representing the true nominal wages in Canada and the State of New York, to which he confesses himself as correct, it would be impossible not to see that his method is fallacious. But we cannot admit the accuracy of a wages table of the mechanical employments, laborers, and female servants of Ontario, which leaves out of the account the chief city, where wages rule the highest. His method is this: he takes the cost of nineteen articles of provisions, of seven of groceries, of two of fuel, of one light producing material, of seven of dry goods, of house rent (four and six room tenements), of board for men and board for

women. If, again, we admitted the accuracy of these, which there is much reason to doubt, nothing is easier than to show that the whole comparison rests on a fallacy, and is entirely worthless. In the case of each article he strikes the average, and then gives the total of all the averages, and draws his conclusions. By this process, he makes the excess of purchasing value in New York wages over Ontario wages, 2.88 per cent., gold measurement. This is a very poor result to claim—an advantage for New York of less than three per cent. The comparison, if it were true, would be of no value, for the reason we have mentioned in connection with Canadian emigration literature. New York contains handicraftsmen of every kind, and their wages rule exceptionally high. Mr. Larned felt that he could not apply the New York average to the whole Union, and prudently abstained from the attempt. But even, as applied to that single State, the comparison is valueless. To make it fair, it would be necessary to show that mechanics invest equal proportions of their earnings in all the numerous articles mentioned. If the item of rent Ontario eats up between a sixth and a fifth of the income, in one case, and only a tenth in the other, the true comparison would be with the relative purchasing power of the balance. Let us see how this stands. The average rent in Ontario, of four room tenements is set down by Mr. Larned at \$4.12½ a month, and in New York at \$8.40. For six room tenements, the difference is much greater: \$4 and \$11.20 respectively. In other words, the New York mechanic pays for a six room tenement nearly three times as much as an Ontario mechanic pays. The New York mechanic, occupying a six room tenement, pays \$135 against the \$48 paid by the Ontario mechanic. Taking sickness and time lost from severity of the season, in some employments, it may fairly be assumed, that the former pays between one-fifth and one-sixth of his income in rent, while the latter will not pay over one-tenth. It is the proportion expended on each item that constitutes a proper ground of comparison.

We cannot here attempt to refute in detail the erroneous figures and false conclusions of this writer; but we have done enough to show the rottenness of the superstructure. Official advocates of immigration could have rendered no greater service than by preparing and distributing a complete answer to Mr. Larned. His publication offered a fair opportunity for Canadian authorities to place the true state of the case before the emigrating population of Europe; but it has not been taken advantage of.