

COPENHAGEN AND ITS FREE PORT.

Editor Monetary Times,

SIR.—Denmark, once so great and powerful, is now but a small country, covering an area of only 14,779 square miles, and with a population of a little less than two and one-half millions. But still the Danes are a progressive folk, and in the last decade a marked development in every branch of Danish industry and trade has been perceptible. I wish to call attention to the new free port of Denmark and to see if more trade cannot be produced between Canada and Denmark.

Copenhagen the capital of Denmark, with nearly 450,000 inhabitants, is not only the largest of all Scandinavian cities, but also—situated as it is on the shore of the Sound, which connects it on one side with the Baltic, and on the other side with the North Sea—the Queen City of all North European sea-ports. Her position and the character of her people can alone account for her progress, devastated so often by war as she has been.

In the year 1800 Copenhagen had only 100,000 inhabitants; in 1860 the number had increased to 160,000, whereas in 1896 the population of the city was 410,000. It is to-day, including the suburbs, about 450,000. During the last years much has been done to improve and augment the natural advantages of the city.

As the town grew, and its resources expanded, it became evident to all the leading men that if Copenhagen were to keep its place in the commercial world, it was necessary to improve what was already a first-rate harbor. A large, modern, well constructed free-port and docks were required to meet the demands of the times, and these are now successfully completed.

The Free Port Bill passed through Parliament almost unanimously in 1891. It was decided that the new harbor should be an integral part of the old Copenhagen harbor, under the control of the Minister of the Interior. The harbor authorities were to undertake the planning of the new work, and to acquire the necessary land, excavate the basins, etc., etc. The bill provided that a company should be formed, answerable for all expenses, and that it should be called "The Copenhagen Free Port Company, Limited." The company was organized with a capital of four millions Kroner, about \$1,070,000, guaranteed by the National, the Handels, and the Landmand's banks, of Copenhagen. It was so arranged that the Government Harbor Authorities should transfer the harbor, when built, to the company which is to carry it on for a period of eighty years under a deed of concession, but on the understanding that, if desirable, the State may take over the management at the expiration of twenty-five years. It is calculated that the value of the free harbor, including the expropriated land, amounts to \$6,000,000.

The great work was commenced in the summer of 1891, and, being carried on with considerable energy, was finished in the course of three and one-half years. The area of land reclaimed from the sea to form the harbor is about 148 acres. In some places the water was exceedingly shallow, but in others it was as deep as 24 feet 7 inches. From the excavating and filling up of 89 acres, the large basins and stretches of ground forming the quays were formed, the harbor being supplied with four large basins or docks, namely:

1. The Northern basin, with a depth of 24 feet 7 inches and 858 yards of quays.
2. The Middle basin, with a depth of 24 feet 7 inches, and about 686 yards of quays.
3. The Western basin has a depth of 26 feet 8 inches and 1,167 yards of quays.

4. The Eastern basin with 30 feet of water and 1,476 yards of quays, and a Fairway mole 309 feet long.

The quays alone have a length of over two miles.

Free from all the inconvenience attending the payment of customs on goods entering the port, whilst being shipped or unshipped; the free harbor is, as it were, a foreign land in the home country. In addition, it is almost entirely free from the usual dues and fees which weigh so heavily on shipping elsewhere as ships entering the free port are required to pay only a nominal pierage due, thus making the Copenhagen free port one of the cheapest in the world.

I shall give in another letter a comparison of Copenhagen harbor charges with those of North German cities, and show some more interesting data for Canada, I hope, if you grant me space for another letter.

TH. N. VISHOLM.

Toronto, 2nd July, 1900.

A CANADIAN SOLDIER'S LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

An Ontario lad, a sergeant in "D." Battery, of Royal Canadian Field Artillery, writes on 21st May to his relatives. The force was guarding the Orange River bridge at Fort Munster, and had not much to do, so that the writer had lots of time to think of home, and what he would do when he got there. It also shows how our boys enjoy themselves when they get the chance:

"We were in De Aar Junction for two weeks, and during that time three of us were laid up with fever, one of whom died; and to add to things, one fellow got thrown from his horse and broke both his arms. De Aar was a hoodoo to us, so we were mighty glad to get out of there. There used to be three or four funerals every day, all from fever, mostly in the Imperial ranks. Before we left there, six of us clubbed together and bought fifteen pounds of rice, seven pounds of oatmeal, some syrup and condensed milk, to do us on the line of march up here; but as we were only two days getting here, we had quite a lot of these things to spare, so we have been living high for some little time, and intend to do so as long as the cash hangs out. We have been here three weeks, and there is plenty of cash in the treasury yet, with pay coming next week, £2 2s. 3d., so we will be able to keep the mess up for some time yet.

"We are to celebrate the Queen's Birthday on the 25th, by firing a royal salute of twenty-one guns.

"The Lancashire Fusiliers are our partners up on the kopje, a pretty square lot, although they are from the coal mines. Together we furnish the guards and picquets, at which every man gets his turn every third night, and if anyone goes sick, it comes every second night, that is—a night off and a night on, but it is an easy business and we are not likely to get popped off. Although we are having an easy time of it here, we would by far prefer to be up on the firing line and get a smack at the Boers.

"We have erected a table made out of packing-boxes, also an awning of oil bags; under this we eat our three meals, read, talk, etc., so we are more comfortable than eating on the ground and having some clumsy-footed freak walk past raising a dust and filling our canteens full of dust and sand.

"May 22nd. I was interrupted here by the trumpet sounding for stables, and when they were finished it was too dark to write so I had supper instead and then went into town, one store and a railway station. I went to the Y.M.C.A., took a seat, sang hymns, and listened to a rather

dry sermon by some Scotchman. However, he was in earnest, so I can excuse him if his sermon was not up to much. I then went back to camp, where several of us sat and talked till eleven o'clock, after which we covered up in blankets, and went to sleep. I woke up about 3 a.m. and found it rather cool, but I went off to sleep again and slept till reveille at 6 a.m.

"I took my horses down to the forge to get shod the other day, and while I was down there the Kimberley train came in with no less a personage than Dr. Jameson. I got a good look at him; he is rather short and chunky, smooth shaven, with the exception of a dark moustache, on the whole rather a fine looking man."

Young men used to good living in Canada, whether soldiers or not, do not like being kept to a monotonous diet of hard-tack and tinned food, so there is no wonder that they looked eagerly for the good things to eat sent them by relatives. This lad was told months before that cakes, candies, fruits and dear knows what, had been sent from Guelph for their use, and he mourns that they had not been received, adding sadly: "McCrae says the boxes are still at Capetown."

"I have met quite a few of the men in the first contingent, who have been in hospital with wounds received at Paardeburg, and they have some great stories to tell about the charge, the effect of lyddite on the kopjes also on the Boers, and how it feels lying in the trenches, etc.

"Now a little about ourselves: we are in the best of health, in fact we are in a very healthy spot on top of this kopje, where we indulge in some little sports, such as quoits, baseball (we had to make a ball and bat), wrestling, etc. Some of the boys went out shooting spring bok, but judging from their game bags, I could not say they had any.

"22nd May. We have just got issued with tobacco, chocolate, Balacava helmets and two or three other things which were supplied by the Red Cross Society. Some of it was marked from Toronto, some from London, Eng., but none were the Guelph Red Cross supplies. However, one of the boys who was sick at De Aar, and who came in this morning, said that there were forty odd boxes at De Aar for them, so I expect we will have our supplies from Guelph in a day or so. We have church parade to-day at five o'clock, the first one for three or four weeks. Mafeking was relieved yesterday, as you will know long before you get this note.

"In the morning at 6.30, when we take the horses to water, there is generally a sheet of ice in the water-troughs, so you will understand that it is not very warm at night, but we manage to keep warm, wrapped up in our overcoats and two blankets. I will see what I can do about ostrich feathers. There are plenty of ostriches around here, and I have seen lots of feathers, but they were of a poor quality, not worth getting. But I will try and send some good ones."

K. L.

—Mr. James Mason, horse shoer, Montreal, has shod about 900 horses bound for South Africa during the past six weeks, for which it was necessary to employ six extra men. Mr. Mason is an old veteran, and the son of a veterinary surgeon, James Mason, 1st King's Dragoon Guards, who established himself in Montreal in 1840.

—The Elderly Gentleman—The secret of success is to find out what the people want—. The Younger Man.—And give it to them, eh? "Naw, corner it."—Indianapolis Press.