

47,000 corn, 20,000 oats, and 12,000 flour. The Wabash Road brought in 34½ per cent. of this, the M. C. R. R. coming next.

CHINESE VERSUS INDIAN TEA.

Certain of the Chinese tea-growers, it would appear, are not without blame for the circumstance of the remarkable growth of the demand for Indian teas of late and the decline in consumption of Foochow teas. We are favored with copies of a correspondence between Mr. Odell, the Chairman of the Foochow General Chamber of Commerce, and the British and American Consuls at that port, bearing upon the important question of a deterioration in the quality of the tea grown and exported in that district. "It is a matter too well-known to every one in the trade," says Mr. Odell, "that in former years Foochow enjoyed the reputation of producing the finest tea in the world, but that since the year 1870 the quality has steadily fallen off." And he quotes prices in the two years, showing that Kaisow tea, for example, which in 1870 commanded two and eleven pence per pound had fallen in 1884 to one shilling and ten pence half penny: also that Paklin tea, worth two and five pence in the first-named year, was worth only one and seven pence in the latter, and a Tong Fong tea, whose price was one and ten pence, had fallen to eleven pence. The decline in price is not because of a falling-off in demand for fine teas, for that is greater than ever, as proved by the increased consumption of Indian teas which do maintain their superiority in quality. That consumption has grown from 13,477,000 pounds in 1870 to 60,469,000 pounds in 1884. It is not, says the chairman of the Chamber, that the taste for fine Foochow teas has gone out of fashion, on the contrary, the whole trade of England declares that if the old quality of Foochow teas can only be commanded, the demand will be greater than ever. A further strong proof in the same direction is that whereas in former years the Russians, who are known to use the finest teas obtainable, drew most of their supplies from Foochow, take now only "brick" teas from that port and get their fine teas from Hankow, which is a port some distance further north. The cause of deterioration in quality, is apparent, he declares, to every one, and that is the greed of the growers who, in their eagerness to produce quantity have sacrificed quality. Probably this point is more prominent this season (1884) than any previous one, for not only have the native merchants produced with a much smaller amount of outside capital a larger supply of first and second crop leaf than last year. The producing shrub has indeed been allowed to grow up into a tree of six or ten feet high, the soil unfertilized and what used to be a tenderly nurtured plant, has grown into a wild, uncared-for tree. Mr. Odell desired the attention of "the High Authorities," i.e. the Governor General of the province of Fokien, and his address, we presume, drawn to so serious a state of things and suggested thinning out, pruning and fertilizing the shrubs, and he touched upon the heavy inland and export taxes to which Foochow teas are exposed, but from which Indian teas are

free. He seems to have got the ear of the officials by predicting boldly that the revenue from tea would year by year decrease to a tenth of its present amount. At any rate, the replies of the Consuls show that steps towards amendment will be taken. The American Consul sends a translation from the reply of the Governor General to the memorial, saying that orders will at once, (November 25th), be sent into the tea-producing districts to devise better modes and so, as it is worded, "so bring in prosperity and better profits."

REPUDIATION.

Fortunately for Canadian credit the instances are rare in which there has been any attempt at municipal repudiation on any ground, either on a large or small scale. Fortunately also for our reputation the few attempts that have been on a small scale have met with little encouragement in the Courts. A rather discreditable attempt to escape payment of a bill justly owing by the municipality on technical grounds has recently come to light in the case of the municipality of Brockton. That fight, which was in progress before the admission of this little borough into the municipality of Toronto, appears since to have been fathered by the City.

The dispute arose over the bill of Messrs. Robins Bros., public accountants of this city, for services rendered by them to the municipality in re-writing their municipal books, the affairs of the village having become so complicated that it was found impossible to proceed with the business without such services being rendered. This work appears to have been done at the instance of the municipal council, and to have been accepted and received by that council, by a majority of four to one, after it had been completed. Subsequently new kings having arisen, "who knew not Joseph," payment was refused, whereupon action was instituted to recover the bill. At the trial a feeble attempt was made to defend the action on the merits, but this failed.

The technical defence, which amounts practically to repudiation, when the debt is an honest one for work done at the request of the municipality, was then set up, that the corporation was not liable because the plaintiffs had not been engaged to do this work by an agreement under the corporate seal of the municipality. This defence, Chief Justice Hagarty, before whom the case was tried, overruled, deciding that in cases of this sort no contract under seal is necessary. At this stage the village had been absorbed into the city, and strange to say those representing this fair city thought it not discreditable to prolong the fight on this technical point, which was the only one remaining open. The case was carried before the full Court of Queen's Bench and argued in due course. Judgment has now been delivered by that Court; the majority of the members of which concur in the view of the law taken by Chief Justice Hagarty. Consequently the municipality's appeal has been dismissed with costs.

Whether the city of Toronto is prepared to prolong further a fight, the object of which is, on this technical ground, to escape pay-

ment of an honest debt, remains to be seen. For the credit of a city that ought to be above such tactics, as well as for Canadian municipal credit generally, it is to be hoped the matter will end here.

THE MONTREAL CARNIVAL.

The success of the Montreal carnival is once more assured, and the institution, weather permitting, may now be considered as permanently established. The objection is sometimes taken, even by Montrealers themselves, that the advertising of the severity of the winter in the province of Quebec has its disadvantages. But this objection may easily be overrated. Every body who knows anything about a Quebec winter, knows that it is capable of producing material out of which ice palaces are made; and those who have not taken the trouble to learn any thing about the climate need not be considered. This is a kind of business in which Montreal can have no opposition from Ontario, and will probably not have any in the city of Quebec. Ice palaces and condors are costly amusements and can only be built, supposing the materials to exist, in large cities.

Certainly, the varied sights and exhilarating amusements which our Chief city has to offer, have brought to her annual carnival a great concourse of visitors, American so well as Canadian, and it is to the credit of Montreal that the affair is managed so well and that complaints of extortion are few. This latter phase makes pleasing contrast with New Orleans, if accounts sent by Canadian visitors to that city are to be depended on. A welcome feature of the present carnival is the extent to which the French Canadian portion of the population is taking part in the programme and subscribing towards the expenses of the affair. Where in former winters they held aloof, they have now an East-End Committee, which has secured the building of a gigantic ice-pyramid and other attractive spectacles in their quarter of the city. The city is full of visitors, and the retail traders are reaping a harvest, the furriers in particular.

THE NELSON RIVER EXPEDITION.

During the summer of 1884, one of the engineers in the employ of the Dominion Government, made an exploration of a very interesting character, more especially in connection with the possible opening up of the Hudson's Bay route. This surveyor was Mr. Otto Klotz and it was the business of his party to make a micrometer survey of the Saskatchewan River from the Forks to Lake Winnipeg, a distance of 416½ miles, and then, after crossing the lake, to follow down the course of the Nelson to Hudson's Bay. We find the subjoined description of their trip in the *Winnipeg Sun* :—

In one sense the river may be divided into three sections. First from the Forks to the foot of Tobin's Rapids, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles. This section is high table land, with considerable timber land along the banks, especially on the north. On the south the country is mostly open. The whole district is available for agriculture. The second division is from Tobin's Rapids to Clear Lake, a distance of about