

bor. The plan submitted by Mr. James Shearer is this: To blast the rocks and dredge to a uniform navigable depth that part of the river St. Lawrence in front of the city lying near the south shore, from Victoria Bridge to below St. Helen's Island. Then, with the material so obtained, to build an embankment several hundred feet wide from Point St. Charles diagonally across the river to the island named, a distance of 9000 feet. The effect of this structure would be, of course, to divert the entire volume of water to the southward of St. Helen's island through what is now a shallow and rock-strewn channel unsafe for even small boats; to do away with the rapids at St. Mary's current; and to make a still-water harbor, albeit two feet lower than at present, the water in the running stream being correspondingly raised. Furthermore, this embankment would, it is contended, afford with a bridge from St. Helen's Island to St. Lambert on the south bank of the stream, 2,700 feet, a much-needed roadway across the river, and would do away with any present need for a tunnel or a bridge for traffic, either local or through. Railway Tracks might be laid upon it. The further consideration is urged that a head of four feet would by this means be obtained for mills, elevators and factories.

The scheme was upon the whole looked on with favor by the Board, although the absence of any definite proposals as to ways and means detracted from the present feasibility of it. It is not without opponents, either, who foresee great evils to arise from its adoption. Seeing that its estimated cost is not less than \$7,000,000, it is not easy to discern how interest on so large a sum could be obtained without making a heavy demand upon the already burdened trade of the port.

Meantime we may remark that the figures published elsewhere show a very marked and gratifying increase in the tonnage and revenues of the harbor.

ANOTHER CANADIAN MUSEUM.

M. Drolet, writing from Brussels, after having examined the Commercial and Agricultural Exhibition in that city, suggests the establishment at Paris, by the Government of Quebec, of a museum similar to the Canadian museum, in London. The idea is not a bad one, but it is too restricted. Any Canadian museum in Paris ought to be illustrative of Canada, as a whole, and not of a single Province merely. Whether, as M. Drolet suggests, the proposed museum should be under a commercial agent who should have the *exequatur* of the British ambassador, opinions may differ, but this need not

create any serious difficulty. It seems that some strange notions regarding Canada are current, even in France, from whose loins the people of Quebec sprang. M. Drolet reports that a syndicate of Paris bankers, anxious to find out whether it would be practicable to establish a line of steamers between Havre and Montreal, consulted a retired captain of a French frigate. Here they could promise themselves that they would get the very best information. The retired captain gravely informed them that "the navigation of the St. Lawrence was almost impossible on account of the nearness of Canada to the magnetic pole"! After this, it will hardly be denied that Canada does suffer occasionally from the want of some commercial agent, at Paris, similar to an American Consul.

A LESSON FOR ONTARIO.—Writing upon agricultural productiveness, the *Courrier du Canada* seeks to improve the statement made by some of the tenant farmers' delegates to this country, in 1879, on the backward state of agriculture in Canada. M. Tassé is not afraid to accept the somewhat discouraging facts. He remarks that in a statement of the comparative production of ten different countries, Ontario and Quebec stand at the bottom. These countries are England, with an average of 29 bushels of wheat per acre, Pomerania, Belgium, Holland, France, the United States, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the two Provinces of ancient Canada. It is certainly humiliating that so rich a country as Ontario should stand ninth on the list. M. Tassé attributes this backward state of things to the bad examples of farming which our agriculturists have before their eyes from their earliest days, and the want of adequate agricultural instruction. The avowal is not flattering, but it is not devoid of truth. Our farmers have been too much in the habit of taking what nature gives spontaneously, and neglecting to return to the soil the productive elements of which they deprived it. This is the first and rudest stage of agriculture. But it is right to take credit for the advance that is now being made, in many quarters. We are entering on the second and better stage of agriculture; and if slow progress be made, in the old settlements in future, it will be because there is within reach so much rich virgin soil still left for the thriftlessness of man to impoverish.

NATURAL GAS.—The discovery of natural gas, in the Province of Quebec, coupled with the rumor that the city of Quebec may get light from this new source, is said to have caused some uneasiness to the gas companies. We doubt if there be much occasion for alarm. The natural gas is a long

way from Quebec, and may never be brought there; and, in any case, gas works could be converted to other uses. Gas, less costly than that made for illuminating purposes, will probably become the fuel of the future. Our present methods of obtaining heat from coal are the most unprofitable that can well be conceived, there being about nine-tenths waste. Artificial gas will be welcomed, if it can be got cheaper than the gas now used; but perhaps it is not very likely to be got. The thing is not impossible, as the experience of several towns in the States shows. The only general improvement in the supply of gas is likely to come, as far as it is now possible to see, from what is known as water-gas, in the manufacture of which any kind of coal can be used.

—The French papers in the Province of Quebec are mourning over the loss of population, carried off by emigration to the States. The *Quotidien*, Levis, says the bishops have in vain issued mandates with the object of stopping the outflow, and in vain the parish priests have seconded the efforts of the bishops, for "in spite of all that, the mania of expatriation continues in activity." That journal suggests a remedy, however. It demands the punishment of the "odious *embaucheurs*," who decoy away the unwary. But this would not be an easy task, and its execution would perhaps breed trouble. M. David, in the *Tribune*, has another remedy: He thinks the Local Government should assist the surplus population to settle on the land. This is undoubtedly the better remedy, though it would become difficult of execution, the moment the Government attempted to supply anything more than the land.

—The coal mines of Cape Breton are said to be now worked to the full extent of their present working capacity, a capacity which is of course, capable of almost indefinite increase. The shipments from Sydney and North Sydney, to the 25th October, this year, were 157,000 tons against 110,000 tons for the same part of last year. The increase is made up in part by extra shipments to Montreal. Nova Scotia coal reaches Montreal in considerable quantities, if very little of it comes here. Is Montreal to form the natural limit of the range of the distribution of Nova Scotia Coal? The *Halifax Morning Herald* triumphantly attributes the increased shipments to Montreal to the National Policy, while the *Morning Chronicle* rejects this explanation with scorn. It is something to know that the party journals cannot explain away the fact.