

originating at New York and immediate vicinity; another from Philadelphia and vicinity, and another from Baltimore; provision being made that each group should lead up to another, so that there should be no gap between either of them through which business that should be pooled could escape. Then, as to east-bound, the pool should be made to include all business destined to or through either one of the four seaboard cities and points in their vicinity common therewith. You would have in that territory a compact organisation, each member of which could control the rate the entire distance between the pooled or objective points. In other words, you would have a body which could be readily handled, and which could shape its own course. That organisation could then adopt and enforce the rates which it might see fit to establish. Those could be made arbitrary." Mr. Midgley is mistaken in supposing that the pool could enforce any rates which it might see fit to demand. The power of the railway companies over rates is very far from being unlimited; the matter is one in which the legislative authority, to which the companies owe their corporate existence, has something to say. President Tyler, after he had read Mr. Midgley's letter, stated his own opinion: "The whole question comes to this—that you have to embrace every point from which the traffic will be sent, and every point for which it is destined, and until you have done that, and given arbitrary powers to the three commissioners in that way we shall have no lasting peace on that continent." He announced his intention to visit Canada, and when he gets there he wants "to induce the various companies who are competing with each other and us (the Grand Trunk) to adopt some system which shall prevent this suicidal competition going on any longer." Clearly this points to the Canadian Pacific as well as other companies. The public, which looks at the matter from the point of view of men who pay the rates which the companies charge, cannot be expected to look on the scheme with unmixed approbation. There are people who believe that all pooling by railway companies should be prevented; and this sentiment the projects of the poolers will have to encounter sooner or later. One thing is certain: the right of the Legislative authority to control rates and fares exists, and is not likely to be surrendered. It should not be injuriously exercised against the companies; but in its exercise the Legislature should, as far as possible, look to what is fair and just, both to the railways and the public, and to produce some sort of harmony from what may appear to be conflicting interests.

Though there was a better tone at this meeting than at some recent, previous meetings of Grand Trunk shareholders, there are individuals, on both sides, who still carry on the war between the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific in a destructive spirit. Mr. Abbott boasted that he had prevented the Canadian Pacific company selling £2,000,000 bonds of the Ontario and Quebec railway company. But it is a sign of the times that he was listened to with impatience and was reproached with being a bear on Pacific and with wasting time by speaking

beside the question. On the other hand it is difficult to believe that the interests of the Canadian Pacific can be advanced by the sort of attack which he read from a paper characterized by him as the organ of the company. This is not the only occasion in which the paper in question has erred seriously by an excess of zeal and damaged the cause it intended to serve.

TORONTO HARBOR.

Toronto owes its existence entirely to its harbor; without the harbor there would have been no city; if the harbor were now destroyed, the injury to the city would be incalculable. The harbor is formed by the deposit of a bank of sand of varying width, subject to removal, as it was deposited, by the elements. The island, once a peninsula, was formed by a storm cutting the ligament that bound the deposit of sand and shingle to the mainland. A storm moves the sand and shingle of which what is properly called the travelling beach material is composed, in loose and scattered masses of hundreds of tons. This movable deposit is not unlike that to which Venice owes its system of canals; but here the island is two miles from shore, the intervening space, except at the west, where the island makes a right angle to the main portion of it, and stretches near the shore, is open water. After the breach in the sandbar, which converted the peninsula into an island, the force of the elements over the deposit was vastly increased; and the havoc made, and liable to be made, threatened the existence of the harbor. The city called on the government for help; and the government responded by agreeing, on certain conditions, to assist in saving the threatened harbor. But the city was to do its share, as well as the government, by an appropriation of \$100,000, which has been expended on crib-work, &c. The city's promise was not followed by performance.

Now, when the work has come to a stand, the city sends a deputation to Ottawa to ask for a further appropriation. The Minister of Public Works, very naturally, takes occasion to remind the delegates of the city's obligation in the premises, and insists on the fulfilment of the conditions of the grant. This is a very proper course to take. Toronto has nothing to gain, Ontario has nothing to gain, by an attempt to make it a rule that expenditures of this kind should fall exclusively on the government. Besides, Toronto had come under a distinct agreement to do its part, and its dilatoriness in performance has put the work already done into peril; if not protected before winter a very heavy loss is likely to occur, making it necessary to commence the protective work anew.

The city delegation promises that a by-law for \$100,000 will be submitted to the rate payers. There is no assurance that some "crank" may not get up opposition to the by-law on some pretext and defeat it; the contingency is quite possible, indeed, not even improbable. It is quite clear that good faith required that the city should have put itself in a position to perform its part of the bargain without any doubt. It should have provided the money in a way that was

not liable to the contingency of miscarriage. As it is, efforts should be made to ensure the carrying of the by-law authorizing the appropriation of \$100,000 towards this work. The commercial life of Toronto requires the preservation of the harbor, regarding which a great deal too much apathy exists. This comes of the habit of looking to the Government to help us, when it is our duty to help ourselves. No doubt the Government has a duty in the premises; but the performance of that duty does not release the city from doing its share, nor yet it from the obligation which it deliberately incurred, in the premises. Let steps be taken to ensure the success of the by-law.

THE SEAL PRESERVES OF AMERICA.

Four different kinds of seal are caught on the coasts of Labrador and Greenland. The harp, the square flipper, the hood and the native seal. The hood seal is especially sought after, and it is the most difficult to kill because it inflates its hood or head covering, which is so thick that a club or bullet will not penetrate it. If struck in the throat, however, the animal invariably submits. These seals bring forth their young early in March and whole families are found on the ice. The food of the seal consists of salmon, whitefish, and codfish. These they eat in such quantity that it is believed they materially lessen the catch of codfish west of Newfoundland. Hence the necessity of keeping up a sharp war upon them if the codfishery is to continue to prove lucrative. It is generally found in small herds. The oil of the hair seal is of considerable value, being superior to whale oil for many purposes and the flesh is used for food in Labrador and Greenland. After the seal is caught the skinner removes the fat; an expert will remove the fat from 500 seals in ten hours, 3,000 pounds of seal fat will produce 250 gallons of oil.

The fur seal, from the skin of which the finer garments are made is now caught in but few localities, the demands of fashion, assisted by the avarice of man, having proved too powerful to allow this valuable animal to live in the places he formerly frequented. The seal preserves of the world are now almost exclusively in the hands of a gigantic monopoly, known as the Alaska Commercial Company of San Francisco, which in August 1870 obtained from the U. S. Government a lease for twenty years for an annual rental of \$50,000. This company has secured the exclusive right to take fur seals from the islands included in the territory of Alaska, limiting the number of skins to be taken to 100,000 annually; for which, skins, in addition to the stated annual rental, the company was to pay the Government \$2.00 per skin. These Islands are known as the Pribyloff group and are situated 800 miles off the coast of Alaska.

Early in June the desolate shores of these Islands resound with the hoarse voices of the seals which gather here during the breeding season. According to the description of an eye witness, a gentleman connected with the company, during the summer of 1883 at least 3,000,000 seals gathered on St. Paul's Island; acres of the shore were alive with the animals from June till August. It