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Questions of Fact.

Mr. Edward Atkinson of Boston, is one of the foremost statisticians in America.

Before the economic section of the British association, on Friday last, he read a carefully prepared paper on "what determines the rate of wages?" He meets

Henry George with a square denial of the main fact alleged by the latter—that

civilization and progress tend to make the working classes poorer. And certainly

Mr. Atkinson appears to have figures on his side. Taking the statistics of two New England cotton mills, both in operation prior to 1830, he shows results quite

opposed to some prevailing notions.

Forty years ago the hours of work averaged 13, now the average is down to 11 hours per day. In 1840 a year's wages, for young and old together, averaged \$175; now the average is \$290. The cost of labor per yard of cotton produced has fallen, but this is obviously caused by the use of improved machinery, run at higher speed. In 1840 the labor on a yard of wide cotton cost \$1.82 cents; in 1884, 1.10 cents, showing that the labor cost had fallen by about three-quarters of a cent. The profits on a yard of cloth, while in 1840 were 1.18 cents, had by 1884 fallen to 0.43 cents, or less than half a cent. In 1840 the average number of yards produced per annum for each operative was 9607, in 1884 29,032, or nearly three times as much. Since 1840 wages had increased 64 per cent. on the day, and 96 per cent. on the hour. Unless these figures can be proved wrong, much of the so-called basis of fact upon which Henry George has reared his theory of "progress and poverty" will have to be abandoned.

A Boston paper recently published an elaborate paper from the same accomplished hand on "the railway, the farmer, and the public," in which he challenged

point blank the prevailing belief that the

tendency is now towards an increase of fares and freight by railway. He shows

by what appears to be proof incontrovertible, that railway freights have been falling instead of rising. Admitting the fall-

that stocks have been extensively watered,

he still shows that railway profits have

fallen in proportion to actual capital in-

vested, and not in relation to fiction value merely. Competition among the railways themselves, and by the great

water routes, sends down railway freights

and keeps them down. The process of multiplying competing lines is still going on, with the prospect of keeping freights down to the very lowest fraction at which the roads can be run at all.

The following are among the results of

his inquiries into the charges for carrying a ton of freight one mile on the New York Central and Hudson River railroad,

average for all classes of freight:

	Cents
1868	.237
1869	.183
1870	.161
1871	.104
1872	.050
1883	.038
1884	.038
1885	.010

We quote the figures for eight years only in the whole period of fifteen years, which is enough to show the progress of the changes.

In fourteen years—1869 to 1882—the charge per ton per mile fell from a little over two cents and a quarter to a fraction under three-quarters of a cent. With 1883 there was a recovery in the rate, but it did not seem likely after this to reach one cent per ton per mile. When it does fall below one cent for moving a ton one mile the profits are something infinitesimal, so says Mr. Atkinson, and we believe it.

But, although the farm products of the west are now carried east so cheaply, the consumer has to pay as much as before.

Taking the money required (in gold) to pay for 20 barrels flour, 10 barrels beef, 10 of pork, 100 bushels wheat, 100 corn, 100 oats, 100 lbs. butter, 100 lard, and 100 lbs. flocce wool, in New York, Mr. Atkin- son finds these amounts : In 1869, \$632.65; in 1870, \$776.02; in 1871, \$733.32; in 1872, \$668.34; in 1884, \$621.75. In 1869 the cost of moving thirteen tons of assorted produce 1000 miles was, 36.61 per cent. of the total value in New York; 1884 it is only 17.87 per cent., or less than half. The saving in freight has mostly gone by the "honest farmer," so Mr. Atkinson's figures show.

In the state of Ohio, which is counted to

be midway between the east and the west, the total number of tons carried in 1883 by all the railroads reporting to the state commissioners was \$63,683,643 tons ; total freight charge, \$67,000,000. The average rate per ton per mile was, in 1869, 2.46 cents ; in 1883, .875 cents. In fourteen years the rate fell from nearly 2½ cents to ¾ of a cent. Had the people of Ohio paid on their freight for 1883 the rates (in gold) charged in 1869, they would have

paid \$201,800,000, instead of \$67,000,000 only. Railway freights are certainly falling.

The great popular grievance is, however, the high charges for local as compared with those on through traffic. What Mr. Atkinson has to say on this point we may present briefly, on a future occasion. Meantime, it is evident that some statements as to railway charges which have passed for facts will have to be revised and amended.

Just as in St. Paul have held a meeting and have adopted resolutions. They resolve, first—that the market of the Canadian Northwest naturally belongs to them; and, next—that a reciprocity treaty would be a good way of getting it. This is plain speaking on their part, but it is commonly "reciprocity," we must say. The trade of the Canadian Northwest naturally belongs to Canada first by all means. And if the St. Paul merchants are right in believing that reciprocity would secure this trade to them, then that constitutes the best reason possible why Canadians should oppose reciprocity. Whatever would gain them the trade would cause us to lose it.

The fact is that the N. P. came just in time to save the trade of the Northwest from falling into foreign hands. It was only in 1879 and 1880 that Winnipeg began to take its great start, and that this trade began to be worth anything. The depression made it appear a trade to lose rather than to gain by, for a while, but that turn has passed, and now things are clearly on the gaining side. We should indeed be great fools were we to adopt any policy which should have the effect of giving away to the Americans what rightfully belongs to ourselves. Let the enterprising people of St. Paul take the trade of their own states all the way from Lake Superior to the Pacific ocean and make the best of it. We shall not grudge it to them, for they have the best right to it. But for them to claim the trade of our Northwest also, that is surely asking too much. Canada has as good a right as her neighbor has to a commercial and manufacturing country.

The coolness with which the St. Paul merchants seek for reciprocity on the ground that they would profit by it, is amazing. What they would gain, would tell us why, if trading with Quebec enables traders to pay their taxes, trading with New York does not? Mr. Jury knows why—if dealing with a group who patronize his establishment is good, dealing with one who sends his custom to New York is not. Our trade with Quebec is not lopsided. It is a natural exchange of needed commodities on even terms. With New York it would be all take and no give. But the fiscal policy of the country is to grow rich, and to tax the poor. That is the main reason for the gulf which is appearing to an increasing number of purposes, and the attention of the authorities is called to the matter.

The shipment of buffalo-bone from the plains of the west to eastern phosphate factories has largely stopped recently, because of the reduction in transportation rates. Thousands of Buffalo skeletons are gathered up by the bone men on the prairies, especially in the valley of the Arkansas. One Philadelphia manufacturer has received the skins of two thousand over 200 carloads, at the factory the bones are worth \$25 a ton.

The largest zinc producing locality in the world is the district around Galena, Kan. Last year 70,000 tons were mined.

A Physician's Zeal in Fighting Cholera.

The government physician in the little town of Seborga, in upper Italy, has shown an amount of zeal in the performance of his sanitary duties somewhat beyond that usually displayed even in the midst of a cholera epidemic. He observed that the village, indulged in an unusual amount of filth, and that the soldiers who were assisting him in his hygienic efforts, to capture the offenders and thoroughly bathe them in a convenient stream. While these unfortunate persons were being scrubbed with military vigor, the physician, with a few words of rebuke, and in order to make assurance doubly sure, burned them. The miserable plight in which they found themselves after the performance of their unwilling mechanic greater than the amount of the tariff which the foreign manufacturer is justly compelled to pay before he can place his goods on our market. Mr. Jury has, however, that the soldiers did not burn the dyes which the men had the duty of the case under free trade, when we were at the mercy of our enemies. The fixings of their camp and added the cost of their outfit to the bargain. Now the scales are turned. Keen competition at home has brought many lines of goods to bottom prices, and the outsider either to keep his wares at home or pay in full the additional treasury due to the government for the services of our artisans to supplement his pay roll and to increase his fortune. Canadians would indeed bad business men did the greatest majority of them believe, with Mr. Jury, that it would be better to send our money out of the country to buy foreign labor and to enrich foreign capitalists than to employ labor and increase our wealth and population. To import our manufactured goods and export our farm products would be equally bad, and if Mr. Jury's scheme of war with gods (manufactured in Canada) imports from other countries means a loss to the Canadian mechanic greater than the amount of the tariff which the foreign manufacturer is justly compelled to pay before he can place his goods on our market. Mr. Jury has, however, that the soldiers did not burn the dyes which the men had the duty of the case under free trade, when we were at the mercy of our enemies. The fixings of their camp and added the cost of their outfit to the bargain. Now the scales are turned. Keen competition at home has brought many lines of goods to bottom prices, and the outsider either to keep his wares at home or pay in full the additional treasury due to the government for the services of our artisans to supplement his pay roll and to increase his fortune. 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