

As we have pointed out before, while the cause rests entirely with the Railroad Companies themselves, the remedy is also within their own control. All that they have to do is to lower the rates and bring the through and local traffic rates more nearly on a level, and the evil, if evil it be, will like Jonah's gourd wither in a night. As a rule in Canada the local passenger rates are about three cents per mile for first-class tickets, while in the United States only two cents per mile is charged for the same class of tickets by first-class roads. Three cents may have been a fair rate when the country was young and sparsely settled with comparatively little railroad travel, but to-day with the cost of construction so greatly reduced, and a greatly increased passenger traffic, two cents per mile would be an ample remuneration for the service rendered.

We are strongly of the opinion that Parliament ought to legislate upon this important subject, and in the interest of the public the following points ought to be defined.

1. That the local rate charged for first-class passengers in Canada should not exceed two cents per mile.

2. That, with the exception of special excursion tickets at reduced rates, all railroad tickets should be good until they have been used.

3. That a railroad ticket, like any other article of merchandise, can be transferred from one person to another, the person thus purchasing it to be invested with all the privileges and rights of the original holder.

We are satisfied that if these principles were embodied in legal shape among the consolidated statutes of Canada, a new era would dawn upon the travelling public of this country, and that while they would not receive any more than justice from such a measure the railroads themselves would be equally benefitted by the change.

TAXING COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

The Supreme Court of Canada a few days ago gave judgment in the case of Jones v. Gilbert. The point involved was the right of Municipalities to tax commercial travellers, and grew out of the action of the police magistrate, who represented the municipal authorities of St. Johns, N. B., in fining Mr. Jones for selling goods, rather taking orders for

goods in that city without having taken out a regular pedlar's license. Mr. Jones backed up by the Commercial Travelers' Association, appealed against the magistrate's decision, and carried it to the Supreme Court of New Brunswick, but the appeal was disallowed. As it was a case of great importance to the whole mercantile community, especially the wholesale and manufacturing portion of it, the case was carried to the Supreme Court of Canada, the result being that the appeal was sustained, the decision being given on the ground that the by-law was *ultra vires* because of the discrimination between residents and non-residents.

From recent telegraphic despatches we learn that the St. Johns authorities have, since the publication of this decision, left commercial travellers severely alone. It seems to us to be a great hardship to the poor benighted toilers by the sea, that they can't be allowed to tax the representatives of western energy and industry and thus enrich their depleted municipal treasury, without being interfered with by that august body known as the Supreme Court. They really had a "soft thing" on the western freebooters who swarmed down upon them in hordes, and thought to impose upon their gullability by selling them goods of Canadian manufacture cheaper than they were in the habit of importing them. It was a brilliant idea that struck the city solons of St. Johns, and for their sake it really seems a pity that it should have been illegal. As a new idea in political economy it was unique to say the least of it, while considered socially, it was a christian way of getting square with the people who a few years ago, when their city lay in ashes, put their hands in their pockets and fed and clothed them until they could rebuild their ruined homesteads. But probably we are in error in blaming the people of St. Johns for the miserable, grasping policy of a few of its merchants. It is a well known fact, that in many lines of commercial enterprise the merchants of St. Johns are behind the age, and probably that is why they conceived the idea of making it so expensive or dangerous for the representatives of western manufacturers to visit their city and enter into competition with them.

It is, we think, well that the case has been decided as it has been, for the principle of allowing a city or town to tax commerce in such a manner as that pro-

posed by the city of St. Johns, is not only unjust but vicious in the extreme. It was well to nip the thing in the bud, for although only such antiquated cities as St. Johns, Quebec, practiced it, the evil was beginning to spread westward.

A few months ago we took occasion to comment upon the speech of a would be Canadian Daniel not more than a thousand miles north of Toronto, who, after making a careful and profound research in which he was ably assisted by his chief clerk, had come to the conclusion that it was advisable to put a heavy tax on commercial travellers, not only for the purpose of raising a revenue, but also that the poor country storekeepers might be protected. His idea was, that if the commercial wolves could be thus kept at bay, the mercantile lambs in our country towns would be perfectly secure financially and therefore morally.

As we said at that time, such an idea is protection run stark staring mad, and we might just as well have each city, town and village starting a municipal custom house of its own and taxing all the goods that are shipped to it, as to levy a tax on the person who sells the goods to their merchants. The Commercial Travelers' Associations are to be commended on the fight they have made, and we congratulate them on their success in breaking up such a disgraceful and unjust monopoly.

A NEW COMPETITOR.

Those who view with alarm the gigantic monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate, may find some little consolation in the idea that in the waters of the Hudson Bay and Straits there may probably be found a competing route to the great European markets. It is a well known fact, that for many years past, in fact almost ever since the granting of their charter the "Hudson Bay Company" have been in the habit of bringing the necessary supplies for the forts in the far West by this very route. York Factory on the Hudson Bay port, on the Hudson Bay, is situated in latitude 57 longitude 92½, or neck of land watered on either side by the Nelson and Hayes Rivers, and is geographically several hundred miles nearer to Liverpool than either Montreal or New York. If, therefore, it is possible to ship the grain and