

THE PROPOSED PUBLIC WORKS.

ARTICLE III.

THE state of the Provincial finances being such as to call for retrenchment and economy, the question is pertinent:—Which of the great public works proposed should be proceeded with? We answer, none that Canada can do without.

It would be well for the country if all these undertakings could be postponed until our population and wealth had increased. But the peculiarities of our position, both geographical and political, and the retrograde policy in commercial affairs which the United States threatens to adopt, seems to render some of these public works absolutely necessary to our prosperity and well-being.

Let us glance at each briefly in detail.

And first.—What of fortifications? We say emphatically they are not one of the necessities of our position. The people of Canada are utterly opposed to the semi-barbaric policy, which even Europe is beginning to discard, of one state arming against another in time of peace. Frowning battlements, bristling cannon, and an idle soldiery, may be gratifying to the despotic sovereigns who regard Europe as a chess-board and their subjects as pawns. But for the people of Canada they have no attractions. If the fortifications proposed to be built at Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and Hamilton, would prevent war; or, in case that were impossible, protect our soil from invasion and consequent desolation, their construction might be wise and prudent. But would they attain either of these desirable objects? Even Col. Jervois, in his report to the British Government, anticipates no such result. The mere proposal to erect these military works has largely stimulated the opposition to the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty in the United States; and there can be little doubt that their erection would do far more to engender bad feeling and precipitate hostilities, than to prevent them. As a means to prevent invasion they would be almost valueless. Common sense must teach any one that a few forts could not, in the very nature of things, do much to assist us in guarding a frontier of a thousand miles against an enemy outnumbering us ten to one. And why should we arm, for such in reality it is, against the United States at the present time? For the past half century we have lived as their neighbours in peace and quietness. We were never better prepared to defend ourselves, or the United States less able or likely to attack us, than at the present moment. During the past four years, the Republic has bled at every pore, it is encumbered with an enormous debt, and the fires of the great revolution slumber but are not extinguished—what statesmen retaining their senses, American or otherwise, could think of foreign aggression at such a time? Everything points to peace for many years to come. Then why should Canada, in the face of heavy financial burdens, and to the endangerment of her commercial relations with her best customer, throw away \$7,000,000 upon useless preparation for an imaginary danger? Better far to husband our resources and improve our financial position, so that if the dire calamity of war does overtake us, we may have the means and the credit necessary to enable us to pass through the conflict successfully.

The Intercolonial Railway is the largest and most costly of the undertakings which our Government has had under consideration. Its proposed length is 350 miles, and its estimated cost, which is doubtless below the mark, £3,000,000 sterling. As a commercial speculation it will not pay. A large portion of the country through which it must pass is barren and unsettled; and the dividends it will pay are, with justice, expected to be like angels' visits—"few and far between." But the position of Canada is such that this line of communication with the ocean can hardly be dispensed with. If Confederation takes place, its construction will be imperative. Besides being part of the compact entered into at the Quebec Conference, it would be very absurd for Canada and the Maritime Provinces to be united under one Government, and yet have no means of communication with each other during the winter months! At the present time, whilst our noble St. Lawrence is sealed with ice, we are entirely dependent upon the Americans for an outlet to the sea-board. Upon any whim or caprice of the Federal Government we may be shut out from communication with Europe during five months of the year! The interests of Canada are becoming too vast and important to be thus dependent on a foreign power, however friendly; and although the construc-

tion of the Intercolonial Railway may add to the pressure of our finances, there seems no prudent course open to us but to make a route to the Atlantic through our own territory. If the railway should pay no "dividends," it will at least increase our trade with the Lower Provinces, and open up and develop the section of country through which it passes.

The enlargement of our Provincial canals should entirely depend upon whether the United States renew the Reciprocity Treaty or not. If our neighbours are desirous to continue the close commercial intercourse which has added so much to the prosperity of both countries during the past ten years, then it will be our duty and our interest to enlarge our canals to meet the requirements of Western trade. This expenditure would, we think, be no drag upon our Finances. Our Government derives considerable revenue from our canals each year. In the Trade and Navigation returns, the gross and net revenue of our canals from 1858 to 1863, is given as follows:

Years.	Gross Revenue.	Net Revenue.
1858.....	\$293,322	\$186,437
1859.....	223,714	92,399
1860*.....	333,292	83,064
1861.....	419,385	60,612
1862.....	497,302	88,470
1863.....	385,220	274,527
Total.....	\$2,152,205	\$735,479

With the enlargement of our canals, we might naturally expect a large increase of American traffic through the St. Lawrence route. Three regular lines of vessels are at present engaged in trading between Lake ports and European countries, and before twenty years from the present time, we could easily imagine our magnificent inland seas whitened with sails from every clime. Under the least favourable circumstances, the increased revenue from our canals would go far towards paying the interest upon the cost of their enlargement. Should the United States, however, decline to renew the Reciprocity Treaty, we would not spend a dollar in their improvement. Their capacity is quite sufficient for the trade of Canada for many years to come, and until our Provincial exchequer becomes replenished, we would be very foolish to make costly improvements simply to accommodate our neighbours.

The purchase of the North West territory is not a necessity to Canada, and if the Hudson's Bay Company want £1,500,000 stg. for it, we had better let them keep it. A great amount of downright *boosh* has been penned on this subject. There is doubtless much fertile land in the Red River and other districts. But it is unreasonable to suppose that the young men of Canada, or the immigrant from Europe, will direct their steps to a country so far northwards, surrounded by half civilized Indian tribes, when there are valuable lands in Canada, and millions of acres to be had for nothing in the "great West," with its genial climate. When these lands are filled up, we do not doubt that the settlement of the North West territory will progress rapidly; but not till then. In view of this contingency, a nominal sum might be paid to get rid of the great Fur trading monopoly. But for Canada to pay millions for the territory, and to undertake the vast cost of opening it up for settlement, of governing and protecting it, would be, in the present state of our finances, perfectly preposterous.

MONTREAL CATTLE MARKET.

ALL Horned Cattle continue very scarce, the Americans being eager competitors in the markets both of Western Canada and also the Townships. Prices consequently rule higher than last week, best quality of Beef bringing from \$6.50 to \$7.50, medium \$5.50 to \$6. Inferior sells at \$4 to \$5. Milch Cows scarce at \$24 to \$36 per head. Sheep are in plentiful supply, and prices range from \$4 to \$6, according to quality. Lambs range from \$2.50 to \$3. Calves—There is so little demand for Veal that our quotations are nearly nominal, say \$6 to \$7 for first quality, and \$4 to \$5.50 for lower qualities. Hogs very scarce, but demand limited. Live weight \$7 to \$7.25; Dressed ditto, \$9.50 to \$10.

HIDES.—No demand, 4 to 4½ c. per lb. Sheep and Calf Skins 70 to 80 c. each. Calf Skins active at 13½ to 14 c. per lb.

TALLOW.—Rough, dull at 5½ c. per lb. Lard, 12 to 12½ c. per lb. undressed.

*The great difference which exists between the gross and the net Tolls of 1860, '61 and '62, arises from the large amount of Tolls refunded during those years.

MOST IMPORTANT.

AMONG the papers submitted to Parliament last week is the Report of the Delegates from the Canadian Government to England. Referring to the subject of Reciprocity the Report states:—"We explained" to Mr. Cardwell "the immediate injury that would result to Canadian interests from the abrogation of the Treaty, but we pointed out at the same time the new and ultimately more profitable channels in which our foreign trade would in that event be turned, and the necessity of preparing for the change, if, indeed, it would come." This Report is signed by four of the principal members of the Canadian Government, and is an important document. The extract just quoted contains information of a very important character, which it is very necessary, if it is not a piece of humbug, should be at once elaborated. "The new and ultimately more profitable channels" ought certainly to be indicated. The prospects of a new Reciprocity Treaty do not improve; but, though our Ministers have something better in store for us, they fail to give the necessary particulars to make it available for the public good. They are either unwilling or unable to be more definite in their information. Either view is bad for them, but worse for the country. "The more profitable channels" should be demonstrated, in order that efforts could be made for diverting trade into that direction before the Treaty is repealed, and we are left on the broad of our back. The necessity of preparing for the change is admitted; yet our Ministers, who know of "more profitable channels" for our trade than now exist, fail to show the grounds of their belief. There is an uncertain, anxious feeling in relation to this subject, which is paralyzing the good effects of our harvest and the improved prospects of trade; and it is the duty of the Executive not only to take early action to get a decision on the Reciprocity question, but to make known their views as to what the "new channels" indicated in this grave document really are.

PETROLEUM EXCITEMENT.

EVENTS of a very definite and satisfactory nature as to the existence of Oil-paying properties in Bothwell, Canada West, have transpired during the past week. The "Boston well," owned by a number of Americans, has been made the subject of a test by a committee composed of representatives from the different States of the Union and Canada, who, over their signature under date of 9th August, report that "the well when put into operation, yielded in four hours 32 barrels of oil, with an increased flow as the pump proceeded." An accident to the pumping valve prevented the test being further proceeded with, but the result was so satisfactory as to convince these gentlemen that nowhere on this continent was there better chance for oil operations than in Bothwell. The "Lick" well which has, at times, been yielding 50 brls. a day, but which has been yielding somewhat less recently, has been sold to a Chicago Company for \$75,000 cash, American currency. The Company have large capital, and have taken steps to furnish the well with every description of apparatus, and they have no doubt the well will yield 75 or 80 barrels a day. From all sections of the country we hear of wells being sunk, and notwithstanding the fact that oil is now dearer than it was some time ago, and that too, in face of decreased exports, indicative of decreased production, the belief is still apparently universal, that success must attend intelligent and legitimate operations in oil. A very large amount of money has been invested in Canada, within the last six months, both foreign and local capital; and we still hold the belief that this product will yet contribute largely to the wealth and prosperity of the country.

The Stock Market.

There has been a fair amount of business done this week in Stocks. Our quotations throughout, showing the advance of previous weeks, are firm, and a slight advance has been submitted to in favourite kinds. Bank of Montreal has been sold at 112½ to 112½, Ontario to some extent at 100½, and City Bank at 94. Montreal Mining Consols have changed hands this week at previous rates, averaging nearly \$3 per share. Sterling Exchange is firm at 108½ to 109½ for Bank Bills.

Salt.

Little has been done since our last, and the only sale we hear of was from 2000 to 3000 bushels afloat at 60 c. ex store, small parcels 62½ silver. In bulk, Fine \$1.10.