

## WESTERN TRANSPORTATION.

THE movement now in progress for the reduction of freight charges on produce shipped from the West to the sea-board, is eminently worthy the attention and support of the mercantile community and the public at large. Our merchants are at last awakening to the threatened danger of losing the Western breadstuffs trade by the competition of other cities. That this danger is not altogether imaginary is abundantly manifest. The Mississippi route is already making serious encroachments. Elevators have been constructed at St. Louis and New Orleans, and are now in full operation on business which otherwise would have found its way to New York. Other water and land conveyances are projected, or are in actual course of construction, the effect of which must sooner or later tell seriously upon the commerce of our city.

It is an important fact which cannot be overlooked, that the mistaken policy of merchants, shippers and transportation agents has largely stimulated and encouraged the movements that have already attracted so large a portion of Western commerce from our city. We have rested too securely upon our privileges, and abused our opportunities. It is because New York could carry Western produce to the sea-board cheaper than any other city or State could do it, that our grain trade has assumed such large proportions. But we have not kept up with the times. We have permitted the cost of transportation to increase to figures that operate as a positive bounty against our commerce with the West. Between excessive canal tolls and freight charges, we are in danger of losing the valuable grain trade of the West.

Statistics recently presented to the Committee of the Canal Board of this State, place this matter in a clear light. It appears that the transfer and shovelling charges on canal shipments exceed the toll rates paid to the State. The following table shows the shipments of grain from Buffalo, and the tolls thereon, in 1868:—

Bushels.	Toll to State.
10,369,030, wheat .....	\$513,362 00
15,099,185, corn .....	655,857 00
10,323,504, oats .....	263,190 00
309,218, barley .....	3,719 00
638,899, rye .....	33,037 00
20,161, peas .....	1,019 00

36,754,948 bush. \$1,474,681 00

The charges on above were as follows:

Chicago transfer 2c per bush .....	\$835,098 96
Chicago shovelling \$2 per 1,000 bush .....	73,509 50
Buffalo transfer 2c per bush .....	735,098 96
Buffalo shovelling \$4 per 1,000 bush .....	147,019 79

Total charge .....

Here we see that the shovelling and transfer charges exceed the tolls to the amount of \$216,000. The shipments from Oswego show the same results. Of a total of 6,270,466 bushels shipped in 1868, the Canal tolls amounted to \$172,380; while the transfer and shovelling charges reached \$219,466. The transfer charges alone on the Oswego route exceeds the Canal tolls by more than \$15,000, or, adding the shovelling, by more than \$47,000.

The increase of transfer charges suggests serious doubts respecting the economy of elevators. Previous to the introduction of these mechanical appliances, the regular charge for transferring grain was half a cent a bushel. Now the cost of transfer in Chicago is 2c per bushel, and for shovelling \$2 per 1,000 bush. At Buffalo the transfer charge is 2c., the same as at Chicago, while the shovelling charge is \$4 per 1,000 bushel. The alleged cause of the high rates at Buffalo is said to be owing to a combination, and that a charge of one half cent a bushel in place of four cents a bushel would be ample to cover all expenses, and leave a fair margin for profit.

The New York Corn Exchange Committee has been at work for some time endeavoring to procure the co-operation of Western Boards of Trade and Elevator Companies to remedy existing evils. The proposed reforms are comprehensive and nearly reach to the bottom of the trouble. They include a limitation of credits; a reduction of elevator, transfer, and other charges to the extent of one half the amount of present rates; a prompt delivery of grain and unloading of boats, and a movement for a reduction of canal tolls.

Nearly all the leading grain ports have returned favourable answers to the propositions of our New York Corn Exchange, and there is a fair prospect that when navigation opens, there will be an important reduction in transfer and freight charges. The contemplated reductions may not go far enough, but any effective reduction is an advantage. That there is a large margin for reduction is evident. Competent authority estimates that the freight from Chicago to New York may be carried at the following rates:

	Existing Rates.	Proposed Rates.
	Wheat, Corn, per ton.	Wheat, Corn, per ton.
Lake freights.....	\$2.38	\$2.38
Canal freights.....	3 15	2.91
Transfer charges.....	2.04	2.04
State tolls.....	2.07	1.73
Total.....	\$9.64	\$9.06

The establishment of these rates of freight charges is quite feasible, and would give New York an advantage that would distance all competing routes, whether by the Mississippi or the Canadian canals. Every dictate of sound economy and wise statesmanship favors the change. The canal tolls are excessive, and would bear a reduction of full one-half. Last year the canal revenues were \$4,400,000, and the expenses \$4,011,000. Of course the balance goes to the extinguishment of the canal debt, but there is no good

reason why it should be wiped out at a rate that threatens the loss of the commerce which they were established to promote.

We have the very highest interest in reducing the Western freight rates to a minimum. Only about 5 per cent of the grain importations of Europe is derived from the United States. Considering the immense capacity of the West, the only reason why our grain exportations should not be doubled and quadrupled is to be found in the excessive rates of shipment. It costs nearly as much to get a barrel of flour to the consumer as it costs to produce it. The largest proportion of this cost of transportation is on the American side. Competition has reduced the ocean charges to a reasonable rate. It should be remembered also that the growth of the West largely depends upon the ability to ship its produce to the European markets at reasonable rates.

In the meantime, the grain movement of the Mississippi expands. As we have stated, elevators are now at work at St. Louis, and barges are towed from various points to New Orleans by tugs. These tugs are of novel construction, with small upper works and stern wheels which are usually uncovered, presenting a curious appearance. The barges have a capacity of 3,000 bushels each. Corn in bulk is transported from St. Louis to New Orleans at 10c per bushel, with a charge of eight-tenths of one per cent for insurance. A tug can tow several barges, and occupies six days in the passage down. A serious drawback to the Mississippi grain trade occurs in the low draft of water at New Orleans. The largest class of vessels and steamers cannot pass over the bar just now, owing to the quantity of mud below the port of New Orleans. These obstructions are probably temporary, as the citizens are making praiseworthy efforts to restore the commerce of the Crescent city, and, of course, a plan of harbor improvements would be intended in any measure for that purpose. The present high rates of foreign freights and insurance, also constitute serious obstacles. The rates are about twice as much as in New York, and the time for passage from New Orleans to Liverpool is twice as long as from New York.—*New York Economist.*

## PORK PACKING IN THE WEST.

THE Cincinnati Price Current publishes its complete figures of the packing of the season just closed, which compare with its figures for the past two seasons as follows:—

States.	1868-9.	1867-8.	1866-7.
Ohio.....	544,661	562,955	557,899
Illinois.....	806,033	1,068,495	1,072,552
Indiana.....	324,659	321,888	323,978
Iowa.....	126,395	162,944	177,044
Wisconsin.....	129,094	193,958	163,495
Missouri.....	361,067	333,111	328,611
Kentucky.....	183,426	157,880	157,880
Total.....	2,477,264	2,792,031	2,781,460

Or 325,668 less than last season; and 304,106 less than the season before.

The average weight and average yield of lard per hog, compare for two years as follows:—

	Av. weight per hog.	Av. yield of lard.
	1868-9.	1867-8.
Ohio.....	224½	204½
Illinois.....	202 4-5	205½
Indiana.....	208½	202½
Kentucky.....	207½	207 1-6
Missouri.....	206½	193 7-9
Iowa.....	201½	190½
Wisconsin.....	211	189½

The general average, according to the Price Current, is 206½ lbs and 24½ lbs lard against 201 and 21½ lbs. last season, and 235 1-7 and 29½ lbs. the previous season.

Taking the average given above as a basis, the virtual decrease from last season in the number of hogs packed is given as 244,901 hogs of the averages of the season of 1867 and 1868, and the actual decrease in the yield of lard—other than head and gut—674,784 lbs.

The total number of hogs packed in the West, for each of the last twenty years, is given by the Price Current as follows:—

Year.	No. Hogs.
1849-50.....	1,652,220
1850-51.....	1,432,867
1851-52.....	1,182,846
1852-53.....	2,201,110
1853-54.....	2,534,770
1854-55.....	2,124,404
1855-56.....	2,489,592
1856-57.....	1,818,498
1857-58.....	2,219,778
1858-59.....	2,465,552
1859-60.....	2,355,832
1860-61.....	1,156,302
1861-62.....	2,803,666
1862-63.....	3,060,528
1863-64.....	3,261,100
1864-65.....	2,422,775
1865-66.....	1,705,955
1866-67.....	2,781,460
1867-68.....	2,702,432
1868-69.....	2,477,264

The statement of the Cincinnati Price Current of the quantity of pork packed in the West during the past season, printed above, is thus criticised by the firm of Kearschlag & Co., St. Louis:—

Within the week the commercial compiler of the Cincinnati Price Current has published his long looked for annual statement of the slaughter of hogs at the West during the winter of 1868-69, which shows a decrease, as compared with the season of 1867-68, in numbers, of 325,668 head; but a gain in average

weight of 5½ lbs, which reduces the net decrease to 244,901 of the weight of last season; and an increase of 2½ lbs per hog in lard, which makes the net reduction in the crop of the West only some 8½ per cent below the product of last season. We have no disposition to controvert nor even criticise this statement; but we cannot withhold an expression of disappointment, nor refrain from remarking that it is not sustained by the observation of careful observers, nor countenanced by either the extent or character of the meats held in the West, which are both similar in quantity and lighter weight. But it is not important whether the deficiency in Western packing was 300,000 or 500,000 hogs, since it was only one of the many packing districts. In New York there was a large deficiency as compared with last year; in the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland there was a deficiency of at least 1,000,000 of hogs; France, Denmark, and the German States—all considerable packing countries—are short, as are Russia, Hungary and Italy; thus making the supply in Europe deficit, and satisfactorily accounting for the renewal of European orders upon a more liberal scale than they have ever been at this advanced period of the season."

## THE DOMINION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

WHY, in the name of everything that's good, do not the Directors of the above Company clear up the doubts that at present hang round it? With suspicion on every side, with grave charges made with Directors resigning, all the general public has had laid before it in the way of reputation has been that at a dinner at St. Catharines, at which we present Directors and Stockholders, as "outsiders barbarians" were assured that it was "all right." No proof that the charges made were false, no proof of the soundness and integrity of a concern in which the people of this country are asked to invest £500,000, but merely champagne congratulations on the construction of a few miles of the road, and grand prophecies for the future. If this is to remove distrust, to relate charges, it is easily done, but we are doubtful. The Upper Canada and Commercial Bank were "all right" till they failed; and, more to the point, the Grand Trunk Telegraph Company was no doubt heralded as "all right," and decidedly proved it right to be considered so. Why, if everything is satisfactory, if the inauguration and present position of the company are satisfactory, is it not clearly shown to the public? The originators of the scheme are pronounced to be speculators and unsound. Why not disprove this? They are accused of controlling the stock in order to gain their own ends. Disprove this. Of having secured the contract for the building of the line at an exorbitant price, and such as to allow them a profit of something like \$125 per mile or one-half of the contract price and that they secured this contract without it having been submitted to tender. Disprove these assertions. Distrust is too general now to be neglected. Stock must yet be sold—and who will buy? Payments on stock already subscribed must become due, and who, in the face of all these charges, will have any satisfaction in making those payments, or will not avoid such payments if possible. The company at present is loaded down with an incubus of doubt. The Directors must remove their load before success can crown the undertaking.—*Galt Reporter.*

## LIVERPOOL TIMBER TRADE.

THE Liverpool Timber Trade during February has, say Messrs. Duncan Ewing & Co., been remarkably inactive and certainly contrary to what was anticipated a few months back, when the then favourable aspect of the stocks held over, and other indications of improvement in commercial affairs generally, gave some hopes of infusing increased activity to the wood trade; such however has not been the fact, and this unfavourable state of business may be chiefly traced to the present unsatisfactory condition of the manufacturing districts:—

CANADIAN WOODS.—About 240,000 feet of White Pine have been consumed during February, whereas 340,000 feet was the average consumption per month in the year 1868. Neither the comparative light stock nor the high rates demanded at Quebec for the ensuing season have had the effect so far of lifting the value much beyond what was current at the close of last year. Red Pine, Oak, Elm, Ash, and Birch, are in fair request.

NEW BRUNSWICK, &c. SPRUCE DEALS.—There has been no variation in the value until towards the close of the month, when a cargo recently arrived from St. John, brought an average of £7 17s. 6d. per standard.

UNITED STATES WOOD.—A large cargo of Pitch Pine from Pensacola has arrived on demers's account. There is no new feature in this article beyond an anxiety to realize preparatory to the fresh arrivals. Staves and Locust Treanals find buyers ex-ship.

EUROPEAN WOODS.—Four cargoes have arrived—one from Dantzic; one from Stettin with Fir Timber; one from Warsaw; and one from Tornea with deals.

EAST AND WEST INDIA WOODS.—A cargo of Teak has arrived from Moulmein, which remains undisposed of. Greenwood is without any improvement, the demand being languid.

The correspondent of the Toronto Daily Telegraph, writing from the Western States, says that although so many young men are being tempted to emigrate to the West, in consequence of representations made by the agents of the Pacific Railroad Company, he has no hesitation in saying that a poor man has far brighter prospects in Canada than there. He adds that almost every Canadian with whom he has come in contact is "dead broke," and longing to be back in the Dominion.