TRANSPORTATION OF BREADSTUFFS.

IN the course of an article in September, on the subject of Breadstuffs, the probable supply, and the demand from Europe, we briefly alluded to the fact that the matter of transportation might become of unusual importance in its relation to the course of prices. Year by year the centre of the great wheat-growing districts of the United States has been moving westward, until, from being in the Genesee Valley, as it was thirty-five years ago, or in Ohio or Michigan, as it was twenty years ago, it is now on the banks of the Mississippi, or to the westward of that great river. And as the centre of the wheat-growing region has moved westward, the quantity which it is necessary to bring to the seaboard every year has increased. The same remark applies, in a less degree, to other cereals—corn, oats, rye, barley, &c.; and the subject of the means provided and the rates paid for the transportation of the vast quantities of breadstuffs now seeking the seaboard from far western fields, is one whose importance is constantly asserting itself.

The serious breaks in the Erie Canal, which were produced by the severe floods of October, and against which no foresight could have guarded, suspended navigation about two weeks, and was attended by various circumstances which gave it unusual importance, and finally forces the whole subject of the transportation of breadstuffs eastward upon public attention. The crop of spring wheat was fully twenty days late this season, and this break occurred just at the time when it began to move—delaying the first considerable arrivals of spring wheat at this market to about the first of November, instead of the first of October, as usual; giving us, in fact, but one month's free deliveries by canal, instead of two, as usual. Should the weather prove exceptionably favorable, we may have yet five weeks of canal navigation, during which we have to accumulate such a stock of grain in store as will, with the aid of the receipts by rail, enable a steady export movement to be maintained, in addition to the local demand, without giving room for any important advance in prices. But if the canal should be suddenly closed by frost in the last week in November, it would be a serious circumstance.

The period during which the Erie Canal remains closed is usually about twenty weeks—sometimes as many as twenty-two, and often not more than eighteen. The largest accumulation of grain in store at this market, at the close of navigation, has been about fourteen million bushels. The actual wants of the market for consumption are about 85,000 bushels per day; namely, 15,000 bushels wheat, 35,000 bushels corn, 25,000 bushels oats—the balance rye, barley, &c. Thus fourteen million bushels in store will nearly meet the wants of consumption during the winter months. But it often happens that the quantity in store at the close of navigation is unequally divided there being a surplus of one sort and a deficiency in another. The railroads or speculation must restore the equilibrium.

It is but two years since the railroads began to deliver any considerable quantities of grain at this market. In the fall of 1867, we think, we found at the close of navigation but about 1,500,000 bushels of corn in store—a quantity so notoriously inadequate to our wants, even when supplies from the South were added to it, that a great speculation and a large advance in prices resulted therefrom. These high prices induced the Erie railroad to make the needful preparations to bring forward corn in cars, and very soon we had a supply of from twenty to thirty thousand bushels per day. The speculation broke down, and every legitimate interest was vastly benefitted. This marked a new era in the transportation of grain from the West. We have since received large quantities of wheat and oats by the same means. For the eight weeks ending last Friday, the deliveries of grain at this market by rail amounted to the handsome aggregate of 8,412,600 bushels, over 70,000 bushels per business day, and nearly equal to the home wants of the market. The Erie road has now many competitors in the business. The New York Central, in connection with the Hudson River Railroad, and the Pennsylvania and New Jersey roads, are all engaged in bringing grain to this market.

During the winter season, these roads cannot bring to us so much grain as now. They will be encumbered with large quantities of perishable products, which usually seek the market in cold weather. Dressed hogs, game and dressed poultry—these justly claim and receive the preference. But if the deliveries of grain by rail at this market be reduced to 50,000 bushels per day, there would not, even then, be danger of any deficiency in supplies. It is very probable that an accumulation of stocks in December will approximate eight million bushels. The export demand is confined entirely to wheat; and of this, unless the shipments shall be much larger than for the past few weeks, a stock of four million bushels will be ample.

Besides, there are routes to the seaboard from the West other than those leading to New York. Portland is an important point, and nearly monopolizes the export of oats; Philadelphia and Baltimore can get forward liberal quantities of grain by rail. We noticed the other day the charter of a vessel to load wheat at Philadelphia for a British port. This is an unusual circumstance. In former years, that city, as well as Baltimore, drew on us largely for wheat. There remains to be considered the Mississippi route, *via* New Orleans. It is a long and expensive one, it is true; but during the active export of cotton, ships at New Orleans are glad to get some grain for ballast, and will accept low rates. This may in a measure overcome other obstacles to a movement of grain in that direction.

We conclude, therefore, that although rates for carrying grain from the growing districts to the seaboard are likely to be high for some months to come, there is no danger of such a scarcity of supplies at this market as to promote successful speculation, or seriously interfere with the regular course of shipments to Europe, unless something unforeseen should occur; and we infer that the lateness of the crop of spring wheat, and the break in the Erie Canal, are not likely to be attended with the important effect upon prices which many seem to expect. Still, if they shall attract attention to the growing importance of increased facilities for transporting the products of the West to the seaboard at all seasons of the year, an important service will always have been performed.—*Com. Chronicle.*

ENGLISH GRAIN MARKETS.

THE *Mark Lane Express* of October 26th says:—

The week opened with fierce winds and heavy rains, and closed foggy and cold. The month hitherto, like every season of this remarkable year, has given us a renewed taste of summer and unmistakeable signs of approaching winter. We can, therefore, no longer depend on the growth of vegetation, and we are reminded of the possibility of the closing of the Baltic and other plates. It would, indeed, be welcome news to holders in the present plenty of foreign stores, but even without this the market, as we anticipated, has exhited a rising confidence, and with our general averages down to 47s per quarter, a year's interest and granary charges only about 5s 6d per quarter, holding by no means appears an unsafe operation, with the chance that half that period may make an important change. The early reports, too of an abundant and good crop of potatoes, which were doubted from the beginning, have proved positively false. The fact that scarcely any are fit to keep is sufficiently plain to all who have tried them, and though their rapid destruction is not felt much at present, it must eventually tell upon the country. We are, therefore, be coming more seriously deficient in farinaceous food; while the meat market, already high enough threatens us with a further rise. All this occurring at a time when such multitudes are out of employ is no slight matter, and although we are neither alarmists ourselves, nor wish in any way to spread the feeling, a caution against all matter of waste seems not untimely. Prices have advanced 1s per quarter, and in foreign countries there are many markets equally improved. France is about 1s to 2s dearer; Belgium is slowly following her; Hamburg Stettin and Rostock are 1s per qr dearer; and though Hungary, the Italian States and Odessa continue in calm, the fact that France and England show improved prices will soon have their influence in these places. But the first improvement came from the very quarter where most was feared. Flour has gone up at New York 1s per barrel, and wheat in proportion and as the cold weather may bring an early winter in the States, we may find ourselves suddenly left to what the Mediterranean can do, while the Black Sea and the Azof will be shut up till the spring. These considerations following the present turn in the trade may induce our own growers, or the richest of them, to wait for better times. The arrivals off the coast since the 15th of October were 29 cargoes, of which 16 were wheat, 9 maize, 2 barley, 1 rye, and 1 beans

A NEW CANAL PROPOSED.

THE Chicago *Journal* is speculating upon a new project which, if carried out, will have an important influence on the future of that city. This is no less than "the building of an immense canal from the Calumet to the Mississippi, striking that river just below the Rock Island Rapids, capable of floating ocean ships. It is not the dream of a brainless adventurer, but was advanced by an engineer who had carefully studied the whole plan, and pronounced it not only feasible, but that its accomplishment would make Chicago the mistress of the continent. It would bring within her reach the cotton trade of the South, with which she could build up Lowells upon the rivers (like the Fox Rock, &c.) which are near her boundaries, and she could supply the machinery and great staples to the South, the traffic in which has made the East rich in return."

The Calumet River is only about fourteen miles south of the centre of the city, and consequently will be "taken in" before many years. It strikes us, however, that if the ship canal for ocean ships is ever built, the Western terminus will be where these ocean ships will break bulk except for local trade, and where they will receive their outward cargo. But it is hardly worth while to speculate upon this point yet. The *Journal* is sanguine, however, and considers the construction of the canal as something more than a future possibility.

THE PORK PACKING PROSPECTS.

THE light stock of pork and bacon now in all the leading markets of the country (it being less than it was at this date last season, and then it was regarded small,) and the high prices, coupled with the reasonable prospect which exists of the quantity of pork which will be cured the coming season, have already produced a good deal of anxiety on the part of packers, and not a little apprehension regarding the future. All reliable accounts from the interior represent a great abundance of stock hogs, and that they are in a forward condition, and that although the corn is short, yet it is sound, and that with a large amount of old corn on hand, and but little prospect of foreign demand of any consequence, there will be enough to feed all the hogs fit to be fatted; and not only this, but potatoes are unusually abundant, and will not admit of transportation to market at the present or prospective prices, excepting those sections in the immediate vicinity of the markets, and therefore, doubtless, they will be used very extensively in fattening hogs and cattle. But the slight stock of old meat will lead to a general demand for new cure as soon as it can be got in a condition for transportation to the consuming markets, and will have a marked influence in keeping prices at a high point comparatively, and this will exist at the very time when pork-packing will be general.

There is another feature which cannot be overlooked, namely, country packers and outside operators have been very fortunate in their transactions the last two years, and have made money rapidly, which will have a stimulating influence upon them to buy with more freedom and confidence even at high prices, comparatively. It is clear that the wants of England will be much less than they were last year, and at last year's prices little will be needed as the supply of both hogs and cattle, in the British isles, is much greater than it was a year ago. There seems to be but little doubt that the growth of the business of summer curing, which has already become so general and successful, will continue, for it is quite clear that instead of feeding the great bulk of the crops in the fall and early winter months, under the usual disadvantage of cold, bad weather a portion of the time, spring and summer feeding, which can be done to so much greater advantage, will become more general from year to year, therefore it will become more unsafe to make the winter curing the basis upon which to calculate the season's business.—*Cincinnati Prices Current.*

COMPLAINT OF OIL REFINERS.

THE Petrolia correspondent of the Sarnia *Canadian* says all the refiners in Canada appear to be thoroughly dissatisfied with the result of the working of the act imposing a duty on refined oil, and the inquisitorial mode adopted by the Inland Revenue Department in discharging their duties. The fact is, that one and all want this act repealed. The United States had a similar act, which they repealed; holding that no article necessary for use ought to be taxed. I cannot state the amount that the collection of these duties cost the Government, but the sum collected is about $160,000 annually, besides the 20c. inspection and the license. Now as the expenses of running it comes out of these funds, the actual revenue derived from this source amounts to a mere bagatelle, whilst the inconvenience, the inquisitorial supervision, and the annoyance caused to the refiner is beyond description; besides the fact that no refiner, let him be ever so correct, can keep up to the requirements of this act, but is daily in terror (lest by some slight oversight or illness of his clerk,) some of the Revenue Department may walk in and seize his premises in her Majesty's name. An instance of this happened the other day when one of the staff (a Mr. B.) walked in and demanded to see the books of the standard refinery here. They were, of course, at once submitted for his august inspection, when it was found that, owing to the illness of the chief clerk, the crude oil account had not been posted up to that date, and for this trivial matter Mr. R said he meant to seize the whole of the premises, and it was only by the greatest coaxing that he was induced to allow the book to be posted in his presence (which took some 20 minutes). He said it was the duty of the officials of that or any other refinery, in case of fire, to let it burn, if the putting out of said fire interfered with the posting up. Now, had Mr. R. seized, it would be impossible to calculate the damage he would have inflicted, and that for such a slight error where no conceivable fraud could be thought of. But this would not have been the end of it, for after the seizure comes the tug of war; one lot of affidavits appears against another sent in for judgment before a tribunal of officials who do not know oil from benzine, and who, in spite of all, appear determined to support their officers whether right or wrong—and the delay caused by this is in itself ruinous to the owners; for the time occupied by these officials in making out their case will generally exceed three months. I judge by the time taken to abjudicate on the Trover and Swan refinery, the acts of which are as follows: That refinery (a small affair) took out a license some time last summer, and on one occasion they had some refuse heavy oil worth nothing lying at the bottom of an old tank; for the not reporting this, their refinery was seized. One of the parties interested went off directly to Ottawa to see the head man. In stating his case, he was assured that on his sending affidavits he would be released—this be did at once, but from that time to this, now over three months, nothing has been done. This is great hardship, for small as the affair may seem, still these men had their little all invested in this concern, and this action has nearly ruined them. I think, therefore, it is the duty of every refiner in Canada to join in a petition showing up forcibly these facts, and praying for a total repeal of the Act above named; or failing in that, to have it so modified and amended that in case of violation of any of its provisions, the case may be adjudicated before a competent tribunal. As I shall have occasion to allude to this subject frequently, I will now leave it for the consideration of refiners, at the same time intimating that they are by no means the only sufferers, as the consumer has the piper to pay, while the refiner has the disagreeable officiousness of the department to endure.

THE GRAND TRUNK.—*Herapath's Railway Journal* (England) of October 2nd, says;—Mr. Potter, the President, has arrived in Canada, and is hard at work inspecting the line and its management. From accounts which reach us from various quarters we fully expect Mr. Potter will be enabled to give a much better account of the position of affairs than most proprietors imagine is the case. We believe that very great progress has been made in the renewals of the way and the improvement of the rolling stock. We also believe it will turn out, as if by a happy fluke, that the route chosen for the Intercolonial railway is the very best for traffic, but of this more anon.