

are going to have a freight service, much slower boats can be accepted and can be made to pay; therefore a very much lower subsidy would be ample.

However, it seems quite evident that, with the large majority which the Government have, it is altogether likely they may be able to carry this measure through. It is, therefore, in the interest of the Canadians generally to see that her best ports are utilized. From the accompanying reports and newspaper extracts, you will see the strong points of contrast made between the two leading winter ports. The St. John people now appeal to the spirit of fair play among the Canadian people to have their port given a fair trial. Without unnecessarily depreciating the fine harbor at Halifax, it is certain that St. John possesses a very great many advantages over it.

If the fast service is to be established, all that the St. John people ask is that they may, at least, have one winter's trial of the service, in order to show how much more regularly and speedily passengers can reach the West through this port than they could through Halifax. The great difficulty in entering Halifax harbor in stormy weather; the large number of wrecks; the immense loss of life which has occurred along the coasts near the entrance of that harbor; the great risk of snow blockade of the only line of railway connecting with Halifax; the recent ice and fog blockade; the fact that steamers have been delayed outside of that harbor for three or four days, and for a shorter period on many occasions, contrasted with the fact that steamers can readily approach St. John in all kinds of weather, and in the most dense fog, without any danger—all these matters should be carefully weighed and given the best consideration before the country is committed to sacrificing the best winter port in America north of Baltimore, for the sake of the strong influence in favor of the Halifax harbor.

There is another matter which should be taken into consideration by the Canadian public, particularly with our legislators, in dealing with this matter. They should remember that while the Halifax people have called upon the Dominion treasury to construct the larger portion of their harbor improvements, railway extensions, etc., the citizens of St. John have shown faith in their own harbor by constructing all of these, including, with the aid of the Provincial Government, an extensive elevator. They have also given the Canadian Pacific R'y a branch running into the city with extensive terminal facilities; and have constructed a large amount of wharf and warehouse accommodation without calling upon the Dominion Government for any assistance, excepting only such facilities as were necessary for the accommodation of their own road.

Yours respectfully,

WINTER PORT.

St. John, N.B., 4th May, 1894.

FAST STEAMSHIPS.

The Allan, Dominion and Beaver steamship lines have addressed the following joint letter to the delegates of the Patrons of Industry, who recently interviewed them on the subject of a fast freight service across the Atlantic:

"As requested by you, we beg to submit in writing some comments on the business conversation had with you at our conference, and on the propositions you left with us for our consideration.

"The first three propositions may be considered together. They are: (1) On what terms steamship owners would undertake a fast freight and cold storage line between Canada and Great Britain at rates so regulated as to give shippers a sensible advantage over shippers by American lines of a similar class, and an equality by the cold storage lines of New Zealand and Australia. (2) If the ocean steamship owners will state the terms in writing in order that the Patrons of Industry may bring them to the notice of government and parliament. (3) If the ocean steamship owners will assist the Patrons in promoting the acceptance of such terms by government and parliament, and apart from such promotion to help in bringing about the rejection of Mr. Huddart's project.

"Assuming that a 'line' is intended to make regular sailings, presumably weekly, to one port of destination in Britain, we would submit that the purposes of your constituents could not possibly be served by so very limited

a scheme, even if only export traffic of a more or less perishable character be considered.

"There is at present no one port in Britain which buys so large a share of Canadian dairy produce, or which has a monopoly of that description of traffic, sufficient to make a special connection with it alone a matter of first importance. Nor is the week-by-week volume or destination of such traffic regular. Sometimes London is the large buying market, at other times Bristol, occasionally Glasgow to a lesser extent, and then again Liverpool.

"The three lines whom the delegates invited to a conference are able to give a tri-weekly service to Liverpool; the Dominion line could, probably, further arrange for a weekly service to Bristol, and, on our part, in addition to our Liverpool weekly line, we could probably give a weekly service to both Glasgow and London. Services such as these would be vastly more beneficial to the agricultural interests of the country than any fast freight line could possibly be, whatever degrees of speed were promised or attained. In fact, great speed has not been found to have, for export traffic, any appreciable commercial value. The fast vessel making the Atlantic passage from New York in six days may, other things being equal, get a preference, but, broadly speaking, she does not command higher rates of freight than the slower sister-ship sailing on alternate weeks, and making a nine days' passage. During the St. Lawrence season of navigation we are in direct competition with the New York lines in Chicago and other western markets, and are, in conjunction with other railway connections, able to divide with them the export traffic in perishable cargo on about equal terms as to freight rates. Your request, however, is not for equal, but for better, terms than are currently obtainable on the Atlantic seaboard. Suppose, then, that we took as a basis the rates of freight current in New York from week to week by the Cunard, White Star and American lines, and undertook to maintain our Montreal rates for dairy produce at a rate sufficiently low to keep the New York rate at all times 25 per cent. dearer than ours, would that be a sufficient reduction to meet your requirements for a sensible advantage over United States shipments, and, if not, what, in your view, would be?

"The cattle freights are not so easily dealt with on account of the governmental disabilities heaped on Canadian shipping. Among them is the department's requirement that the Canadian pens are to be eight or ten inches broader than those of the United States, thereby confiscating about 10 per cent. of our available space without any resulting benefits to either man or beast. This necessitates on a year's traffic from this port a diminution of the available export spaces to the extent of about 8,000 or 10,000 head, representing a sum equal to \$100,000 or \$120,000 of freight earnings. If we are to take the New York freight rates as a basis here also, 5s. per head must be added as an equivalent for our larger spaces so long as the government's order for these remains in force. This being understood, we will be glad to be informed what percentage of deduction would in your view constitute the 'sensible advantage' suggested. Provision would also require to be made for contingencies such as presently exist. The government's quarantine regulations give the Canadian exporters a monopoly of the Montreal market, with the result that the making of freight rates is very much in their hands. The highest present obtainable rate, Montreal to Glasgow, is 40s. per head; whereas in New York we are making contracts at 55s. for their smaller spaces being equal to 60s. for ours. New York rates are, in point of fact, 20s. per head dearer than ours at the present time.

"Sack flour and grain are usually freighted at prices already so low as to leave scarcely any margin for reductions. Our present open rates for sacks are 8s. to Liverpool and 8s. 6d. to Glasgow, per 3,240 lbs., without leading to business, and grain rates are but 1s. 6d. per 480 lbs. to both Liverpool and Glasgow. The Government might take off the canal and harbor taxes, which on sacks are 50 to 60c. per ton. But please indicate to us what your views are in respect of this traffic and what reductions you think reasonable. We have had considerable experience in the matter of cold storage extending over a number of years, and our conclusion is that the necessity for it is sentimental rather than commercial. Large sums have been spent in fitting up refrigera-

tors in our vessels on both the ice and chemical systems, but save in the case of dead meat traffic from Chicago they were never used. The extremely cold temperature of the St. Lawrence voyage enables us during the summer months to deliver in perfect order in Liverpool quantities of lightly cured boxed meats brought to us from Chicago in iced refrigerator cars. If circumstances should in future change in this respect, and if it be found that cold storage is required by shippers in commercial quantities, we are and will be quite ready to enter into a contract to supply it on reasonable terms. We append short answers to the remaining propositions as follows:—

"(4) (Whether it would be more advantageous for the exporting interests that a fast freight line should use the St. Lawrence route to confine itself to an all-the-year-round port.) Assuming that either Halifax or St. John is the place indicated, we have to say that so far as regards the exporting interests of Ontario and the North-West, neither of these ports can be made serviceable to an appreciable extent under existing conditions.

"(5) (To what extent a fast freight line would be serviceable in carrying the mails.) The Atlantic cables have rendered the fast transmission of letters of much less consequence than formerly. Moreover, the almost daily sailing of fast boats out of New York must needs be availed of by Canadians, whether there is or is not a fast direct service from a Canadian port.

"(6) To what extent could a fast passenger and mail line, as proposed by Mr. Huddart, provide adequate freight and cold storage accommodation for agricultural products at modern rates. Cold storage accommodations, to a certain extent, could easily be furnished by such vessels, but their usefulness as carriers of export freight generally will be trivial. The utmost any fast freight line can do is to provide room for a small volume of traffic to one port only, a service which, broadly speaking, is almost valueless to the agricultural community.

"After perusing the foregoing you will readily understand how impossible it is for us to be more definite until we are favored with your views in reply. We may, however, say in general terms that for one-third or one-fourth of the sum offered as a bonus for a fast mail service, sailing weekly, there could be obtained a service of six or seven vessels a week sailing to four or five produce-buying destinations, and carrying to market Canadian traffic at freight rates 15 or 20 per cent. lower than those current out of New York."

ANNUAL WOOL CIRCULAR.

The past twelve months will long be remembered by those in the wool trade as a period of stagnation and disappointment. The domestic clip of 1893 was bought up and is largely held by country buyers and dealers, anticipating the removal of the duty on wool entering the United States.

The Wilson Bill, now before the United States Senate, may or may not become law in the next few months. If it does, it cannot help the wool market of Canada to any great extent, as wools grown in the United States are now being imported into Canada in considerable quantities, and are taking the place of Canada clothing and down wools, which to-day are unsaleable at the price paid last season.

It is estimated there are (1,000,000) one million men in the United States in enforced idleness, while at least (250,000) two hundred and fifty thousand more are engaged in strikes.

The purchasing power of this large number of wage-earners is almost nil, and this condition must seriously affect all other industries. The strikes in the coal regions, if not settled in a few days, will cause a fuel famine and necessarily close a great many factories now running, and so increase the great army of unemployed.

Australia, Argentina, and the United States are the largest wool producers. When reviewing the affairs of these countries, and noting the financial depression and the great shrinkage of values, it is a matter of pleasure—one may say surprise—to know that Canada has been so little affected. Her financial institutions have proved to be of the best, willing and able to take care of the business of the country. Money is plentiful and easy to obtain by those worthy of credit. Under a moderate tariff