

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 12, 1884.

THE MONETARY TIMES AND THE HUDSON BAY ROUTE.

In the *Toronto Monetary Times*, of the 1st inst., appears a most extraordinary article, under the heading of "Manitoba and Northwest Complaints." The article in question is extraordinary, not on account of any merit as a literary production it can lay claim to, but for the remarkable amount of ignorance displayed by the writer regarding the subject in hand; and it is all the more extraordinary from the fact that it appears in the columns of a journal, as a rule, well and carefully edited. After dealing with one or two matters of minor importance, it launches forth with all its vigor into a tirade upon the Hudson's Bay Railway, which it characterizes as "among the wildest of all the wild schemes which speculation has brought to the surface within the last few years." This assertion it bases upon an idea which it must have conjured up out of its own fruitful imagination. The writer, whosoever he was, must have been as devoid of knowledge regarding the navigability of Hudson's Bay and Straits, as the whole article in question is deficient in common sense. Had he taken the trouble to read the evidence that has appeared in the columns of the daily press of this city for the past six months, he must certainly have known better than to give to the world such balderdash as he has chosen to do. The navigability of the Hudson Bay is a question which no one, outside of a few who are interested in some scheme to whose advantage it might not contribute, for a moment doubts. So overwhelming in its favor is the preponderance of evidence from those who speak from actual experience, and long years of residence in the district, that it is impossible for any unbiassed mind to reach any other conclusion than that, if not for the whole year, for six months at least, vessels can navigate both the Bay and Straits with as much, if not greater, safety than the route from Montreal. In the course of a few weeks, a pamphlet will be issued, under the auspices of the Winnipeg Board of Trade, which will show that navigation can be carried on in every month of the year. We commend it to our contemporary for his careful perusal. To any

one acquainted with the navigation of the Northern seas, it must be patent that if sailing craft, of a common class, can make their way in and out at all during nearly every month of the year, there can be no difficulty in the way of steam navigation for at least six months in the summer. This way, perhaps, seems strange to our contemporary, but will in no way astonish one more conversant with nautical affairs.

With an unblushing impudence, equalled only by the egregious ignorance which is displayed in the treatment of the whole question, the *Times* concludes by making an assertion that the Hudson's Bay Railway, when built, would not pay running expenses, and speaks in slighting terms of the interest felt in the scheme by the people of Dakota and Minnesota. This leads us to the belief that our contemporary's stock of geographical knowledge is about on a par with his total ignorance of matters pertaining to navigation. When the Hudson's Bay Railway is built, a very large proportion of the carrying trade for the vast territories, that lie to the south of the boundary line, will pass over this road. It is their shortest route to the markets of the old world, and will, on that account, afford the cheapest transportation. Being the natural outlet for the vast products of that country, the course of commerce cannot be diverted from it, no matter how much it may grate on the feelings of eastern cities to see the trade, which was wont to pass through their hands, finding its way through the city of Winnipeg on its way to the ports on Hudson's Bay. It will deprive them of some of the pickings upon which they have fattened and grown rich in the past, but we can't help that.

As regards the importance of the carrying trade of the Northwestern States a few figures may not be uninteresting. Already some ten million bushels of wheat of the crop, of 1883, have been carried over the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Road, and the Northern Pacific shows figures quite as large. The total carrying of that crop will reach over sixteen millions. If the production increases in the same ratio for the next three years, as it has in the past three, the hard wheat grown in these two States alone will exceed eighty million bushels, or nearly three times the present milling capacity of Minneapolis. Of this, over fifty million bushels will be available for export. Supposing that only one

half of that were carried over the Hudson's Bay route at ten cents per bushel, the railway would be able to pay dividends such as few eastern roads can show. When to this foreign trade is added all the products of our own Canadian Northwest, which will find their way to market by that route, all chances for its not being a paying investment vanish into thin air. Already British steamship companies are figuring upon securing the carrying trade between Hudson's Bay and European ports. The management of these companies are thoroughly posted on the practicability of the route they propose to navigate, and would not go to any expense had they any doubts regarding it.

In one paragraph our contemporary states that it knows of no opposition to this railway. From this we may infer that it does not seek to dignify its own vaporings on the subject with the name of "opposition," but is only trying to see how much nonsense it can crowd into a given space. The effort has been fairly successful, and the article will, no doubt, before long, appear in dime novel form, with a glaring yellow cover, embellished by a wood cut depicting the author in the terrible mental throes which must have agitated his brain at the time the wonderful production was evolved.

As to the sneer at the revenue of Manitoba, which is cast in to brighten up the closing paragraph, we are not astonished, nor could we expect that a representative of commercial fossilism should foresee what it is possible to accomplish with the undeveloped resources of a new and rich country like Manitoba and the Northwest.

CAPT. SCOTT'S RAILWAY ACT.

Capt. Scott, M.P., for Winnipeg, proposes at the present session of the House of Commons, at Ottawa, to introduce a general Railway Act, applicable to the Province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. An outline of the principal features of the proposed Act is embodied in a circular letter which has been issued. It is set forth in the circular referred to that "the object of the Act is to encourage the construction of a proper system of local or interprovincial railways in the Northwest, so as to furnish transportation facilities as far as possible, equally to all sections of the country." It is contended that such Act "should emanate from the Federal Parliament rather than the Local Legislature, because the former alone has