

out. Any fully authenticated case that comes under our notice, we shall certainly give particulars of. Some people think that an insurance agent is about one remove from the "submerged tenth." That is quite wrong, but—and we say it in all sincerity—some Companies appear to act as though they thought it was correct enough, and that the agent was a person deserving of little consideration."

THE INTEREST OF CANADA IN THE NICARAGUAN CANAL.

In the discussions of the Nicaraguan canal question there have been no allusions made by American journals to the bearing it has upon Canadian interests, and only incidental ones in a few English papers. Yet, this Dominion is vitally interested in that great project both politically and in a commercial sense. The necessity for shortening the route from the eastern seaboard of the United States to the western was realized when California was ceded to that country by Mexico, in January, 1847, for the sum of \$15,000,000, after the new State had been over-run by emigrants from the States in the four preceding years. In 1871, Canada made its appearance on the Pacific coast by British Columbia entering the Dominion as a new Province, and there thus arose the same need as had been realized by the States for closer communication by sea being established between the eastern shores of Canada and her western, and for a shorter ocean route both ways to the vast markets opening up in China, Japan, and Australasia, and the older ones across the Atlantic, from our Pacific ports. The trans-continental lines of both the States and Canada, although of invaluable service in affording facilities for traffic to the Pacific coast, do not provide all the transport accommodation required for which a water route is needed, as it is also for defensive purposes. Although vessels laden in British Columbian ports have made remarkably swift passages around Cape Horn to Great Britain, the distance is too great to encourage ocean traffic by that route. Were it materially shortened, there would be a great stimulus given to exports from British Columbia to the old world, and, in the reverse way, from Eastern Canada to the Orient and Antipodes. Short routes and economic transport are the main factors in the development of trade, more especially such as is dependent upon, or encouraged by, economic shipping facilities. A short route, therefore, by water from British Columbia to the Atlantic, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, would assuredly tend to develop the maritime and general commercial interests of Canada. In case of trouble arising between Great Britain and any maritime power it would be of serious moment to Canada for British war vessels to have more ready access to the northern Pacific than the present route around Cape Horn. The distance saved by the route of the Nicaraguan canal to vessels going from the waters of the Northern Atlantic to those of the Northern Pacific would be double that between this continent and Great Brit-

ain. Were it then even to become needful to transfer war vessels to have more ready access to the Northern Bermuda, to British Columbia, the proposed canal would be of enormous advantage; the time saved would be probably even greater than in the passage to India by the Suez canal. Were the Nicaraguan canal exclusively controlled by the United States and Great Britain, as seems probable, the very existence of this short route to our western coast for war vessels would be a protection to British Columbia in case war broke out with one or more of the powers of Europe, as the British men-of-war necessary for its defence could be placed in that region long before those of the enemy could approach.

In what position does this project now stand, and what are the prospects of being consummated so as to be of advantage to Canada? To understand the situation at present, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the past, and of the geography of the isthmus proposed to be cut through, and of the political interests involved. Our readers know that the continents of North and South America are joined by a narrow neck of land varying in width from 20 to 200 miles. In that isthmus are six separate States, and three territories under British protection. From British Guiana to Jamaica there runs a belt of islands chiefly owned by Great Britain, who is very much in evidence in that part of the world, as the States have become by acquiring control over Cuba and Porto Rico. Since the time of Philip II, of Spain, the desirability of connecting the Atlantic and Pacific, by severing the isthmus, has never been lost sight of. In 1551, 1781, 1838, 1851, and in several years since then a route has been laid out for a canal. The collapse of the Lesseps project is a familiar story. A movement by the States to make the desired inter-oceanic route brought about trouble with Great Britain, which was settled by treaty. The port in Nicaragua where the canal would commence is San Juan del Norte, or Greytown, as its British name is. This place has been a free port, under treaty, since 1860. Into that port runs a river 120 miles long, which flows out of Lake Nicaragua, and falls in its course to tide water 129 feet. Further north is Lake Managua, which is higher by 28 feet, so that the proposed canal would have an elevation at one end of 157 feet above the ocean. This Lake has much historic interest as the scene of Nelson's first brilliant exploit, as, in 1780, before he was of age, he led an expedition across it, and seized Fort Leon from the Spaniards. The engineering difficulties are clearly very serious, but, in these days, difficulties of such a nature are things to be conquered by skill and capital. The political difficulties in sight, and possible ones, are more formidable. In the first place, the proposed canal is projected to run through the territory of one independent State, Nicaragua, and for over 100 miles its southern bank, or side, would be owned by another State, Costa Rica. A resident in this city indeed informs us that it would have to pass some miles entirely through Costa Rica,