

RAILWAY TO THE MUSKOKA DISTRICT.

Very many entertain the idea that the Muskoka District is of such a character that free grants of land to settlers therein are somewhat of a delusion and a snare. Recent information, derived from a personal inspection by a party of our citizens who visited the territory on the invitation of the Directors of the Northern Railway and the Reeve of Muskoka, has, however, changed considerably the popular impression respecting that hitherto *terra incognita*. While there is a great deal of useless land to the north, there is, as well, a large extent of good agricultural land, and the new townships are being rapidly filled with settlers, most of whom are satisfied with the country although there are, of course, persons who find the work too hard for them and leave. The region spoken of naturally inclines to Orillia and Barrie as the chief local centres, and to Toronto as the largest and best market. But railway service extends no further than Barrie, which is 54 miles on an air line from Gravenhurst, on Lake Muskoka. The group of townships lying between Barrie and Orillia are rising into importance and the business they do is probably sufficient to ensure an immediate traffic for a railway. The territory beyond is a lumber region of great value, and in due course of time its agricultural productions will seek an outlet. So that a railway which will serve both cannot but benefit the Province at large as well as the people who will be directly served by it.

There are two railway schemes under discussion in connection with the Muskoka District; an extension of the Northern Railway from Barrie to Orillia and onward to Gravenhurst, and an extension of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway to Orillia and Penetanguishene. Both schemes have their advocates in and about Orillia, but so far as we can judge, the first mentioned extension has the greater number of supporters. The Nipissing Railway Company does not consider that the Northern extension would interfere with its territory, in fact at the meeting held at Gravenhurst, Mr. Worts declared on the part of the Nipissing Company that the Northern extension would have its earnest support. According to Mr. Cumberland, the people of Orillia would prefer Barrie as a market rather than Lindsay, the one 28 miles from them and the other 54. If it be an object to get access to the Toronto market, which is, of course, the largest and best, a distance of 151 would have to be traversed as against 91 miles by the Northern

However, the inhabitants of the Muskoka District have taken the initiative, and it is

understood that the respective municipalities are prepared to contribute, according to their ability, to a work that will connect them with Toronto. In promotion of this object, they recently invited a number of the Corporation of Toronto and of our leading merchants to visit them, and that visit is to be returned by a deputation from Barrie, Orillia, Muskoka and the intervening townships in order to the adoption of immediate practical measures for giving effect to the enterprise in question. Meetings are to be held, at which the Councils of the Board of Trade and of the Corn Exchange, the Directors of the Northern Railway and others of our prominent commercial citizens will consult with the deputation from the North upon the whole subject. The probable result will be the immediate formation of a company for the construction of a railway uniting Lake Simcoe with Lakes Muskoka and Rosseau.

MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE.

Some practical and really useful suggestions are thrown out by a correspondent, "T. M. S.," in reference to the question of Cash *v.* Notes, as bearing on the management of our mutual fire insurance companies. He comes to the rescue of "cash premiums;" and the extensive experience we know him to have acquired enables him to state his case with much clearness and force. Our opinion on the subject is already on record. We know, and are glad to say, that the public have not suffered loss by the extensive substitution by the agricultural companies of the cash for the premium note plan; but we do contend that the liberty exercised by these companies of taking cash premiums without any legal requirement for the provision of capital stock or the creation of a reserve fund, or without any security whatever beyond the honesty of Directors, should be placed under wholesome restrictions—restrictions which do not now exist. If every company would, as in the case of the two companies mentioned, set about the establishment of a sufficient reserve fund there would be no ground of complaint. But all do not, and therefore legislation is needed to reach this point. It is only fair, if the mutual companies, abandoning their characteristic of mutuality, are to compete with stock companies as they are now doing in the different villages and towns, that they should give to the public a similar guarantee of their ability to pay losses which may arise. We believe that the companies themselves are moving in the matter of needed legislation, and that a bill will be brought forward at their instance aiming at the correction of a number of defects in the present law and the attainment of new powers which will promote their common interests.

The barley crop has begun to move; the receipts for the week past by waggons, amounting to about eighty thousand bushels. Several cargoes have been shipped, the particulars of which are noted under the proper heading. This has caused a great deal more activity, not only among the dealers in the trade, but also at the banks; it has favourably affected the city trade in every department. The lateness of the season may be inferred from the fact that last year we had received about half a million of bushels, and shipped three hundred thousand at this date. There is a marked difference in the price—\$1.20 last year and 70 to 84c this year: but the increased quantity raised will make the aggregate result to the farmer and to the whole country about as favourable as last season.

THE CRISIS IN NEW YORK.

(From a Correspondent.)

NEW YORK, Sept. 28, 1869.

It would require even a more graphic pen than that of the London *Times* own correspondent, "Russell," to give an adequate description of the tremendous financial struggle which has recently convulsed Wall Street.

The skirmishing of the opposing forces of Bulls and Bears, which was vigorously kept up during the early part of the week, culminated in the furious combat of Friday, overthrowing, and demolishing many of the wariest and boldest veterans of the army of Finance.

At an early hour the Gold Room was filled with Bankers and Brokers, and the galleries were crammed with interested and excited speculators, whose countenances bore evidence of intense anxiety, as to the result of the struggle about to commence with renewed fierceness. Outside a motley crowd of all conditions, and classes of life, thronged New Street, rendering approach to the gold room difficult, and almost dangerous, except to the active and strong. As the day advanced excitement became more intense. The dealers with frantic gesticulations were shouting at the top of their voices, already husky and hoarse to a degree painful to the listener. Eager faces glowered over the ring, watching the changes with deepening interest. The magnetic indicator worked ceaselessly, marking the ever varying price, but, even the electric spark succumbed, the communicating wires having been burnt by constant and rapid use.

At last came the crash of gold, and down, down with fitful leaps went the price, until it reached 132. The Secretary of the Treasury, had come to the rescue of the loyal league Bears, whose importunities the government could no longer withstand.

It may not be out of place to recount briefly the history of the movement so skilfully manipulated by the *clique*, to which is attributable the confusion and disasters of the Street.

The parties to the combination for advancing the price of gold were known as the "Erie Clique," and were at first composed of Messrs. Smith, Gould, Martin & Co., C. R. Marvin Bros., Wm. Belden & Co., Rufus Hatch & Co., Arthur Kimber, agent Stern Bros., London, and W. S. Woodward. Other alliances were subsequently made, and as the movement began to show signs of success, many bankers began to follow in their wake.

They commenced operations by large purchases when gold was about 132, and continued buying up to about 137, and it was estimated they then held altogether thirty millions of gold, or upwards of eight millions more than that of all the city banks collectively.