

THE ST. JOHN CONFERENCE.

THE conference of Maritime Boards of Trade, held under the auspices of the St. John, N.B., Board, on Thursday 4th inst., was a great success. Representatives were present from the leading Boards in New Brunswick, and so were Mr Troop, President of the Halifax Board, and Mr. Curry, of the Amherst. A number of important questions were discussed, many of which are of equal interest to business men in other parts of the Dominion, such, for instance, as licensing pedlars and hawkers, railway freight discrimination, insolvency, terms of credit, wholesalers selling to consumers.

Standard time was a subject which created much discussion. For the information of readers in other parts of Canada, it may be said that there are several times in the Maritime Provinces. The railways all work on eastern standard time, while every city and town has also a time of its own, based to some extent on the sun. Halifax is, according to the sun, 52 minutes ahead of railway time, but, for convenience, it has been enacted that it should be exactly one hour ahead. In all the hotels throughout the Provinces, there are two clocks - one labelled "Standard Time," and the other "Local Time." In some places there are two local times, and when engagements are made they always specify which time, and there is much confusion. There was so much difference of opinion as to which time it would be advisable to adopt, that a decision on the matter was postponed indefinitely. The majority seemed to favor "Standard," which means that there would be but one time in Canada, East of Port Arthur and Detroit.

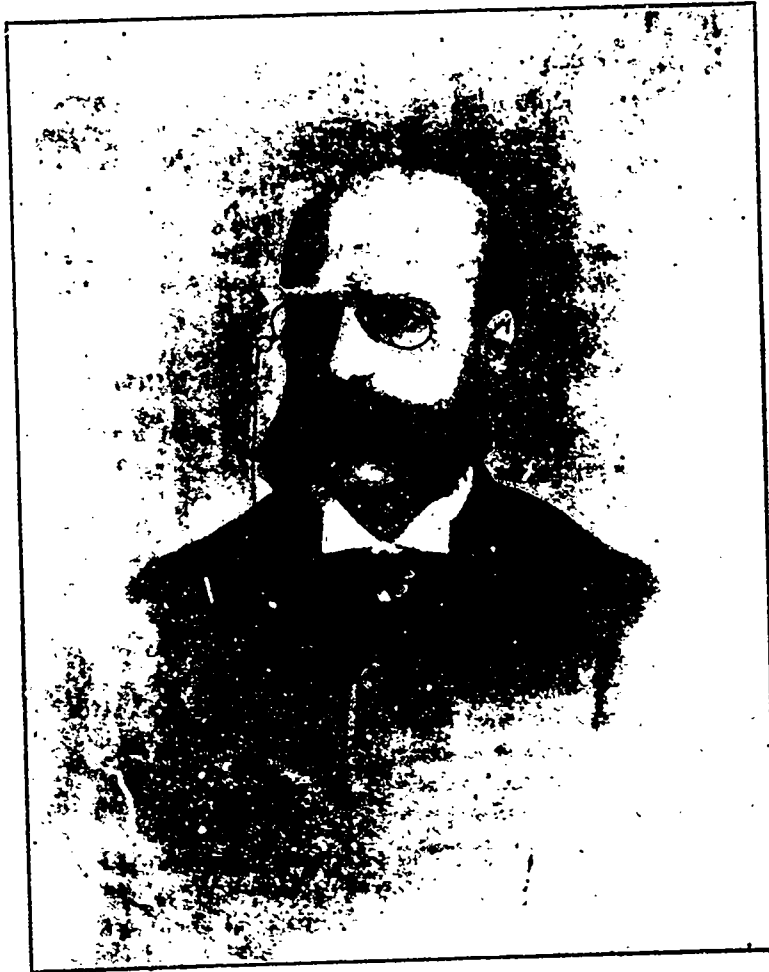
Pedlars and hawkers, with waggon and packs, infest New Brunswick, especially the border and northern parts. They are usually of the very worst class, being the scum of European and American cities. They pay no taxes; the authorities have no control over them; they commit crime, and easily evade arrest by skipping over the border, they cheat; they sell shoddy goods to the unsophisticated farmer, fisherman or laborer. Mothers frighten their children by telling them a pedlar is coming. There are two remedies: High licence fees and every pedlar wearing a badge, or to prohibit them entirely. There is a Provincial law for regulating this traffic, but it is inadequate, and a resolution was adopted asking the Legislature to give municipalities power to license and collect \$40 annually from non-resident pedlars and \$10 from residents, and to compel each pedlar to wear a badge and not to cry his wares on the street. Some of the St. John merchants opposed the proposition, on the grounds that it was an interference with trade and that it was degrading to wear badges but the outside representatives were solid in their opposition to them. It was pointed out that the Local Legislature had no power to pass an act of this kind which would

interfere with trade; but, while admitting this to be the case, it was felt that it was worth taking chances on, especially as the hawking were not likely to carry the case to the courts. The resolution does not, of course, apply in any way to commercial travelers, though it was stated that some of the Montreal and Toronto travelers were not far removed from pedlars.

The town of Woodstock having but one railway, and consequent arbitrary freights, the Board of that town asked the Conference to support them in an effort to obtain redress, which they did. The Conference also gave its support to the Newcastle Board in its efforts to secure more equitable rates to and from Northern New Brunswick points.

Two of the strongest speeches of the meeting were made by the mover and seconder of a resolution requesting the managers of the C. P. R., I. C. R., and G. T. R., and the various Boards of Trade throughout the Dominion to support the Maritime Provinces in

their efforts to make a Canadian port instead of Portland, the winter terminal point for the subsidized line of steamers. This is the most important question agitating the Maritime Provinces, and especially in their relations with other parts of Canada. They hold that it would be advantageous to the Dominion generally; and that, as the provinces had made sacrifices in entering Confederation and in afterwards paying their share of the subsidies for building railways and canals in the west and for ocean steamers, western Canada should assist them, especially as they had so far received no direct benefit from the monies thus spent in developing the west. Some pretty strong things were said of the selfishness of the Montreal and Ontario Boards of Trade, and the scant courtesy with which they had treated the representatives of the Maritime Boards: at other times during the conference the speakers rather harped on the disadvantages of Confederation. When the Government decide, as no



W. FRANK HATHEWAY
(President St. John Board of Trade)

doubt they will, that the terminus must be on Canadian soil, the question will then be whether Louisburg, Halifax, St. John, or St. Andrews shall be the point. The feeling seemed to be that the trade would be divided between St. John and Halifax.

There is no Insolvency Law in New Brunswick, and it was decided to ask the Legislature to adopt one similar to the Ontario Act for the equitable distribution of insolvent estates.

The long credit system was condemned and wholesalers and retailers were urged to curtail credits.

It was decided to organize a Maritime Board of Trade, composed of representatives from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Boards, to meet semi-annually.

The practice of wholesale houses selling to consumers was severely condemned, and it was recommended that in future the name