

Partly, perhaps, to the traditional selfishness of the working of the Allan Line.

This penuriousness, which, in their early days, was a feature impossible to hide under any bushel, has, no doubt, undergone considerable modification. The line no longer loses boats at the rate of eight or nine in six or seven years, some of them from the sheer avarice of over loading, against which some of their plucky captains entered protests so stern and effectual that the company did not dare disregard them. But the innate frugality is apparent in the length of time which elapses before they can persuade themselves to build a new and superior vessel, and in the indifferent rate of speed attained by the best of their boats.

The whole question is one in which Halifax has the deepest interest. Can she not make her voice effectively heard?

#### HUDSON'S BAY.

There lies at the wharf of the Marine and Fisheries Department, in Halifax harbor, a vessel which ought to possess some interest, *i.e.*, the *Alert*, which, under the command of Lt. Gordon, R.N., has made two voyages to Hudson's Bay—in sequence to that made by the *Neptune* in 1884—with the purpose of ascertaining if that inland sea can be made to subserve the purposes desiderated by the people of Manitoba.

To the name of Hudson's Bay a good deal of melancholy interest attaches. We associate with it the fate of Franklin and his gallant companions, to say nothing of that of its discoverer, the brave Hendrick Hudson, cast adrift from his ship by a mutinous and murderous crew, to perish in its cold and dreary waters. It is indeed associated with the history of every Arctic expedition. Nor are its records limited to these, or to Moose and York Factories, where, for 150 years the annual ship of the Company discharged the cargo which contained the supplies for their forts and factories all over the great North-West. It did not escape a share in the wars between France and England for supremacy in North America. In 1733 a fortress of considerable strength called Fort Prince of Wales was begun at the entrance of Churchill Harbor. Its lofty stone battlements and its forty guns should, it would seem, have constituted it a sufficiently formidable post of defence, but Governor Hearne surrendered it without a shot in 1782 to the famous La Perouse, who appeared before it in that year with a seventy-four and two frigates. This gallant and unfortunate Frenchman, who was afterwards himself in one of the most remarkable and comprehensive exploring expeditions ever fitted out, spiked the guns, dismantled the walls, and sailed away with his prisoners, leaving the fort to a solitude and silence rarely broken since.

The interest of both nations in this far away and desolate region was the then great fur trade. This has now much declined, and the settlement of the N. W. in the usual way of immigration has suppressed the old methods of the Hudson Bay Company. Our interest in this great inland sea is now involved in the question, whether it is free of ice in the summer and early fall long enough to render it available for the transport of the harvests of the North-West to the markets of Great Britain. In point of distance, careful calculations show that Winnipeg is at least 800 miles nearer Liverpool by the Hudson's Bay Route than the St. Lawrence, and the saving of distance is still greater if we take a central point of the agricultural lands of the N. W.

We often see a young man to whom prosperity and advancement have come a little too easily, lose his head, become presumptuous, and make the welkin resound with his complaints if the early rapidity of his career is not sustained, or indeed, if he fails to get anything he has persuaded himself he ought to have, in what appears to him due season but to the onlooker an unreasonable precipitancy of expectation. The good people of Manitoba remind us not a little of this exacting sort of person.

Not 18 years ago Winnipeg did not probably contain 400 persons, and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 800 miles, a man might travel day after day, week after week, without the sight of a human being or a human habitation. Within 17 years from 1870, the whole country was opened up across the continent by direct rail, and two roads were running down the Red River, one on either bank, establishing communication with the American system. This amount of progress was far from satisfying the ambition of the young Province, and we are familiar enough with the wails and menaces which arose out of its unsatisfied desires. Evidence of the spirit of energy and progress in a young community is, however, pleasant to see, and it would be invidious to find fault with the wholesome tone which pervades it. If it sometimes goes a little too fast, the error would be on the right side, if such miscalculations did not sometimes operate to set back prosperity already achieved. In their predetermination to see no obstacle to the idea of shortening their communication with Europe by means of Hudson's Bay, it is questionable whether the precipitate construction of 80 miles of railroad in that direction is not premature, for the reports of Lt. Gordon and Mr. Ashe are not very hopeful as to the practical utility of the route.

Two powerful steamers of 6000 tons have been ordered, and, it is said, will be laid on in June. But it is more than doubtful whether the navigation remains open late enough in the fall to allow of the shipment of the year's grain, and apart from the ice question, the explorers mention other difficulties, such as the dangers along an unknown and unlighted coast line, with few harbors of refuge, extreme depths of water close inshore, little room to ride out a gale, and very defective holding ground. No sounding being of any avail, a vessel would have no warning of dangerous proximity to land in foul weather, while the compasses, from the proximity of the Magnetic Pole, are peculiarly treacherous.

The strengthening of vessels against the flocs and bergs of ice that fill

the waters, means increase of cost and decrease of carrying capacity, and the experience of the three expeditions points to the indication that the ordinary period of navigation is from 15th July to 15th October, with a possibility of from 1st July to 1st November.

"Whether," says a recent writer in the *American Magazine*, "a railroad system 800 miles in length, and a very costly fleet, can be employed with profit where the season for transportation is not more than three, or at most four months in duration, constitutes the problem."

If the brave aspirations and gallant endeavors which refuse to recognize the probability of failure should, as appears only too likely, end in disappointment, the Manitobans may be assured it will be a source of lively regret to their fellow-citizens in all parts of the Dominion; but we greatly fear that is the outlook.

#### RED TAPE.

The *London Times* and other journals, in commemoration of centenaries and what not, have recently furnished us with some old-time curiosities in the way of newspaper notices. But grotesque curiosities are not all old-fashioned; or, if they are, we cling to the practice of reproducing them with a stupidity of conservatism which, when we really contemplate it, is astounding.

No one ever thinks of the style of a government gazette. One looks into it, grasps the bare fact of a date, or an appointment, and passes by the ridiculous mass of verbiage in which it is enveloped, as a piece of formality not worth thought or attention. Yet the style of government proclamations is a disgrace to the common sense of the age. We can but ill spare the space, but, chiefly because in its own place its absurdity would never attract attention, and partly because it cannot fail of amusement to anyone with the slightest sense of fun, we reproduce the exquisitely dignified document, in virtue of which our *pater conscripti* are called together for the weal of their country, and, doubtless, for their own.

JOHN J. MCGEE,  
Deputy Governor.

[L.S.]

CANADA.

Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., &c.

To our beloved and faithful the Senators of the Dominion of Canada, and the Members elected to serve in the House of Commons of our said Dominion, and to each and every of you—greeting:

#### A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas the meeting of our Parliament of Canada stands prorogued to the thirty-first day of the month of January instant, nevertheless, for certain causes and considerations, we have thought fit further to prorogue the same, so that neither you, nor any of you on the said day at our City of Ottawa to appear are to be held and constrained: for we do will that you and each of you, be as to us, in this matter, entirely exonerated; commanding, and by the tenor of these presents, enjoining you, and each of you, and all others in this behalf interested, that on Thursday, the twenty-third day of the month of February next, at our City of Ottawa aforesaid, personally you be and appear, for the despatch of business, to treat, do act, and conclude upon those things which in our said Parliament of Canada, by the Common Council of our said Dominion, may, by the favor of God, be ordained.

In testimony whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patent, and the great seal of Canada to be hereunto affixed. Witness, John McGee, Esquire, Deputy of our right trusty, and beloved cousin, the Most Honorable Sir Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquis of Lansdowne, in the County of Somerset, Earl of Wycombe, of Chipping Wycombe, in the County of Bucks, Viscount Calne and Calstone, in the County of Wilts, and Lord Wycombe, Baron of Chipping Wycombe in the County of Bucks, in the Peerage of Great Britain; Earl of Kerry and Earl of Shelburne, Viscount Clanmaurice and Fitzmaurice, Baron of Kerry, Lixnaw, and Dunkerron, in the Peerage of Ireland; Knight Grand Cross of our most distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor General of Canada, and Vice Admiral of the same.

At our Government House, in our City of Ottawa, this tenth day of January, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, and in the fifty-first year of our reign.

By Command,

SAML. E. ST. O. CHAPLEAU,  
Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, Canada.

It is evident that the retention of a mass of fossil and stupid formality like this in official documents must involve supererogatory departmental office work, and consequently unnecessary clerks. In addition, therefore, to its patent ludicrousness, it can hardly be, but that the cause of economy would be to some small extent served by its abolition. We think we could do the business intelligibly in half a dozen lines or so, somewhat as follows:

Lansdowne,

#### PROCLAMATION.

By His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada.

Whereas the Parliament of the Dominion now stands prorogued to the 31st day of January, 1888, we have thought fit to further prorogue the same to Thursday, the 23rd day of February, 1888, on which day it will meet at Ottawa for the despatch of business.

Given at Ottawa this 10th day of January, 1888.

By command,

(whoever is the proper person.)

Fifty other notices bristling with the like ludicrous formalities might be treated in the same way, and the country would be none the worse for the common sense alteration.