

this conclusion, and if at all on what terms, are not entirely free from doubt. The Montreal agreement, never ratified, found no favor. Agreement as to details is of course still wanting. The financial question will figure prominently when it comes to a settlement between the city and the railway companies. The mayor protested against the notion that the city should bear all the expense, and he said the question of right of way for the C. P. R. on the west side of the Don was as important as the viaduct scheme, and pointed out that it was necessary to prevent the C. P. R. getting too great a control. In one respect all the viaduct plans are defective in not providing for an extension west of Simcoe street, which is in fact only the centre of the city, with a great set of population to the west, even beyond the present city limits. For a viaduct, an open steel structure obtained the preference.

#### LUMBER AND TIMBER.

Considerable speculation exists as to the course of the lumber market in the near future. Shipments to South America are at present, we understand, "hanging fire" on account of the financial troubles in the Argentine Republic, where gold has risen to an enormous premium. Should these disturbances continue the Ottawa market will doubtless be affected, large quantities of our Canadian pine lumber being usually shipped by Eastern dealers to Brazilian and other South American ports. The domestic market in the United States is understood to be quiet, particularly in the west and south, where the "bogey" of southern pitch pine rises every now and then to threaten our northern producers.

Stocks of deals in England are reported considerably in excess of last season at this period, but prices continue fairly well maintained.

The square timber trade seems somewhat unsettled, a considerable conflict of opinions existing as to what its future is to be. The supply of timber in Quebec is not large, yet buyers are apparently holding off or else are inclined to ask concessions on prices previously paid this season. Rumors are rife, too, of a very considerable output of square timber during the current season, and unless a demand arises in the spring, the chances are altogether in favor of heavier stocks in Quebec, in a year, than are there now. On the other hand we hear of a few small contracts being made at about last year's prices.

The outlook altogether is not entirely bright, but one important consideration ought not to be overlooked, that is, that the lumber and kindred interests are for the most part in the hands of substantial men, who can afford to hold their property until the markets improve, and there is consequently but little danger of a serious break in prices.

The continued high water during the past summer has brought nearly all the logs out, and the manufacture of lumber for the season is consequently so much increased that it is difficult to find room for it all. The city of Ottawa is getting to be more and more surrounded by it. Not

content with piling in the suburbs, from Elgin street a great part of the way to the Chaudiere, and in many outlying parts of Hull, the millmen are now looking for "fresh fields and pastures new." The Bronson Co., with that forethought which has for years characterized their management, have recently secured about fifty acres on the banks of the Ottawa, below New Edinburgh, and are busy converting it into a piling ground, with tramways, etc.

It is a circumstance worthy of note that the firm of Gilmour & Co., whose name has been associated with the timber and lumber business of Ontario and Quebec for so many years, is advertising all its property for sale "to close a partnership."

#### REDUCED FARES FOR MERCHANTS.

Interest continues to be taken in the proposal that there shall be one day per week on which retail merchants who desire to visit Toronto may travel to that city and return home by rail at reduced fares. The railways have, however, made as yet no definite pronouncement upon the matter. It was said by the *Globe* the other day, "If the railway managers require to be invited to further their own interest, the Board of Trade may well take the matter in hand." And now the Toronto Board has appointed a committee to consider the question and report. From some letters we have seen, the country merchants are not at one upon the proposal of cheap fares for merchants. Some see in it a forerunner of cheap fares for Tom, Dick, and Harry, in say Bowmanville, Barrie, or Acton, and their wives, not merchants but customers, who would then do their shopping in Toronto, to the detriment of dealers in the places named. But this objection will not outweigh the merits of the scheme proposed. Then a view that presents itself to the railway man's mind is, "Why should we be in a hurry to reduce fares in this way? We get full rates as it is, and the extra traffic we should obtain would not compensate for our loss by a special rate." This, however, is a narrow view. Of the advantages of the scheme we have already written. Probably we shall hear more when the Board of Trade committee reports.

#### THE HARBOR OF ST. JOHN.

It appears that the British Admiralty charts do serious injustice to the harbor of St. John, N.B., not only in misrepresenting the depth of water, but by placing shoals where they do not now exist. According to the *Evening Gazette* of that city, "the Admiralty chart of the harbor of St. John is one made in 1844, and the course laid down in it for entering the harbor is not the one which has the greatest depth of water, and therefore not the one best calculated to show the harbor in an advantageous light." The Board of Trade of that city, by its pamphlet issued some months ago, and by the recent report of H. F. Perley, C.E., on the harbor, has done good work in the direction of convincing the British mind that its chart of 1844 was misleading, and that forty-five years

had made changes in the configuration of the harbor. True, it is a remarkable thing, as the *Gazette* states, that for forty-five years a chart of the harbor which is utterly incorrect should have been stamped with the high authority of the British Admiralty, but one also wonders how it came that St. John has lain quiet for so many years under such aspersions.

The course laid down in the Admiralty chart gives but 15 feet at dead low water spring tides. But Mr. Perley's report shows that there is a course into St. John harbor over the bar in which the least depth of water is 21 feet. The soundings on which this course was laid down were made in the spring of 1887. This course, it may be added, is an easy and a nearly straight one. To put the matter as it was put by the U. S. Engineers in describing Boston harbor, that of St. John has a least depth of 24 feet at mean low water and of 45 feet at mean high water. This is contended to be a much better showing than Boston harbor can make and infinitely better than New York. It is a matter of great moment to St. John, and indeed to Canada, that so good a harbor as hers should not be misrepresented, and we are glad to perceive by the communications now received from London by the St. John Board of Trade that the injustice so long done by belief in this antiquated chart is now likely to be rectified.

#### THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

During the proceedings of the half-yearly meeting of the Grand Trunk Railway, held on the 17th October, the president, Sir Henry Tyler, passed in review several matters which are of deep interest to the Canadian public, as well as to the stock and bondholders of the road. There was a gross increase in the Grand Trunk's earnings for the half-year of £118,887, leaving the net increase £48,216. The gross receipts were £1,818,978 and the working expenses £1,296,570; in the latter item there was a reduction from 72.02 to 71.28. The dividend on the four per cent. guaranteed stock, £1 14s. per cent. for the half-year, absorbs £88,736.

The Grand Trunk gives evidence of active vitality in the enterprises which it has in hand and in contemplation. It sometimes halts to consider a new improvement or extension from prudential motives, but it looks out for franchises which will give it freedom of action and keeps an eye on the probabilities of the future. It has a charter for a line in the direction of the Sault Ste. Marie, and at one time it had half the property in the proposed bridge over the St. Mary's river; and in parting with that share, it received the right to use the bridge whenever it might be necessary in its own interest to do so. The right of way is still open and the company is at liberty to construct this line whenever it shall see fit. The prudence of the directors is shown by the remarks of the president. "We reserve our right to extend in that direction," he told the shareholders, "but we ask you to leave it to us to take such measures as we think fit, and not to be in too great a hurry to bring

a burden on the company's policy of "watch and wait" a disposition not to pursue new enterprises till the prospect that they will be profitable is looked upon. There are forces at work in that direction that region an extension of the line only be opened up the first subsidy of construction there extending towards James Bay. Trunk may rely upon support in Ontario. built separately or not become a part of the Grand Trunk. Virtually it would be Northern Railway, the by the Grand Trunk returns.

The St. Clair tunnel factorily in spite of some form of land slides. both sides have been out of 6,000 of the tunnel. The whole length approach to the portage miles. This tunnel was ment over the present the river on floating by the Grand Trunk a de its competitors. With any continues from No agreement with as to rates has been made Tyler expects the time settlement will be completed.

The Grand Trunk, finds a valuable resource of securities, which possible either by a of interest or an improvement of the borrower. The past conversions now year. At first it was saving by this means than the cost of double Toronto and Montreal foreseen that this resource company to do much of pre-preference debenture stock has the company, in the meet all its capital expected from future much that the president declines to mention estimate. But he states that he expects great from conversions than in the past. The the conversions have be judged by the years they reached the It will take three years the double-tracking

Among the bonds for conversion are Grand Haven, and the president described brother," though he better this autumn weakness of this section