

THE COAL TRADE.

We close our record of the trade for the year 1884, in much the same vein as it closed a year ago, for we had then to notice that demoralization and lack of confidence had prevailed in the last three months of the year. The tonnage of Anthracite for this year will be about a million tons less, in the production, than for the year previous. Take the stocks on hand a year ago from the production of the preceding twelve months, and the condition of the trade at the end of the last twelve months is not so bad as a year ago, so far as sales are concerned. In the matter of prices we are not quite so well off as a year ago, particularly on the steam coal sizes. Each concern has been at liberty to sell its coal at the best price it could obtain, and prices have been very irregular during the entire year. At the mines everything is being put on the winter basis of operations, and many of the unprofitable collieries have been closed down; it is stated that the Reading Company will cut off something like a dozen of its collieries until prices improve.

Dealers and consumers are expecting lower prices than last year's opening figures, and the managers must so arrange their cost of production and transportation that this result shall be arrived at. To open with a low range of prices and advance every two or three months in the season would be a very taking plan of operations, for it gives the dealer a chance to profit on his investment.

Bituminous coals close quiet, with few stirring incidents to note. The output is a growing one all over the country, and it is fair to presume that the total figures for 1884 will show an increase over the preceding year, and keep the sum total of our coal output somewhere near one hundred millions of tons. A large proportion of the coal placed this year has been at a very thin shade over cost of production, but cost must be brought down, for a period at least, and the steel rails, heavy engines and large cars now in use on so many of the soft coal carrying roads will tend to this result. In the Pittsburg district, by our advice, there is a very dull condition of things at the railroad pits, the average work being done is some ten per cent. of capacity, as against one-third to a half, a year ago.

The amount of Anthracite sent from Buffalo, by rail, to various points in the Western States, is stated by Commissioner Fink to have aggregated 615,946 tons in the eleven months ending with November. The amount of Anthracite as going to Canada—mainly to Ontario and Quebec—is stated by the Customs Department at Ottawa to be 890,845 tons, for the last fiscal year. The shipments by water from Buffalo this season were 1,360,000 tons. Then we have Oswego, Charlotte, Sodus Bay, Erie and Cleveland, all receiving and shipping a good round tonnage in addition, so that it is safe to say that at least twelve per cent. of the output is placed in Canada and the West. The great Empire State, west of the Hudson River, takes about ten per cent. and will gradually increase its demands. It is stated that a great deal of the all rail coal west of Buffalo was taken at very low rates, in competition with the water rate, which ranged from 50c. per ton to \$1.00 per ton.

The above we have held over for some days it is from the *Coal Trade Journal* of the last week Jan. which continues on 14th:—

Anthracite is quiet but firm; there is no special feature to the market, except the gradual reduction of stocks in the hands of dealers and consumers. The companies are also reducing their supplies, and if there were any seasonable weather it would be very easy to note a quick demand for coal, and this would bring the actual market price nearer to the quotations. On this matter the companies are holding up to their prices, but there is still some coal to be had at least, either purchased when prices were not so firmly held or they represent supplies which have been on hand some time and which there is an anxiety to dispose of. Mild weather everywhere seems to be as great a

factor against lively trade as anything just at present. As to wages in the Anthracite regions for the coming year, there seems to be an inclination toward a reduction of some ten per cent.

The market on Bituminous is quiet, and there is nothing doing in the way of large transactions as yet. The operators are all of them expecting a large increase in their output for this year, either to be secured from former Anthracite trade, or from some natural increase in the business from the resumption of manufacturing enterprises in various sections of the country.

It must be gratifying to the coal interests in the various sections of the country to note the resumption of industrial establishments. They cannot resume without becoming the users of coal, and this will set in motion the circulation of money and give employment to miners and others. There is no doubt that the signs point to an increased coal consumption during the current year.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT OF MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE.

TRADE WITH NEWFOUNDLAND.

Early last spring a telegram was received in this city intimating that the legislature of Newfoundland had adopted a measure to provide for imposing a duty of 100 per cent. ad valorem on all packages containing merchandise imported from countries where a duty on packages containing merchandise from that colony was exacted. While this action of the Legislature of Newfoundland was, on its face, general, it appeared that it was in reality discriminative as against the Dominion, no duty on packages containing fish oils, for example, being levied except in Canada. On enquiring into the matter, the council adopted a minute, which was communicated to the minister of finance.

Difficulties had also arisen with regard to the compulsory inspection of herrings brought to Montreal from Newfoundland. The government at Ottawa at once opened communication with the government of that colony, after some negotiation, the trade here was informed that the question of inspection has been satisfactorily arranged, the duties that had been exacted on packages being refunded as having been collected under a misapprehension of the law.

THE IMPORT TRADE

of the port has not been quite up to last year in volume, except in the article of sugar, which has been largely in excess of previous years; 34,707 tons of shipping have been employed in bringing sugar from Java, Brazil, and West Indies, and other places of growth this year, against 18,960 tons thus employed in 1883, and 21,636 tons in 1882. In exports a fair business has been done, for although

EXPORT OF GRAIN

has fallen off in quantity this year about two and a half millions of bushels as compared with last year, it has been made up by an increase in other exports, such as flour, phosphates, deals, bacon, cheese, and other things; flour being largely in excess. The total quantity of grain shipped this year was 7,421,152 bushels, against 9,781,001 bushels last year, and 8,293,830 in 1882. 446,480 barrels flour were shipped this year, against 294,353 barrels in 1883, being an increase of 152,127 barrels. The shipment of deals to Great Britain has been in excess of previous years, 26,559 St. Petersburg standards, equal to 52,587,205 feet board measure, were shipped, against 23,094 standards last year, and 22,467 in 1882. Lumber shipments to South America were also in excess of previous years, giving employment to a large amount of tonnage. 24,586,878 feet were shipped from the Hochelaga wharves this year, being an increase of about 20 per cent. over 1883. The phosphate shipments show a steadily increasing business. The total shipments this year were 20,461 tons against 17,160 tons last year, 15,556 tons in 1882, and 7,500 tons in 1880, or an increase of nearly 300 per cent. in four years.

ICE BRIDGE AT QUEBEC.

The report made to the council by the secretary, after reciting a variety of information and opinion on the subject, concluded as follows:—
"Having considered the various particulars adduced, it seems to the secretary as if the

questions which were to be kept in view by him might be justly answered thus:—

"1. Can the River St. Lawrence, between Quebec and Levis, be kept open during winter by steam ferry boats?

"Ans. Yes, with but few exceptions.

"2. What influence has the ice-barrier (the so-called ice-bridge) at Quebec upon the ice-formation at Cap Rouge?

"Ans. Undoubtedly a great deal.

"3. Can the ice-barrier at Cap Rouge be destroyed in spring, so as to admit of navigating the river at an earlier date than usual?

"Ans. Yes.

"4. To what extent does the ice-barrier at Quebec retard the opening of river navigation?

"Ans. Probably several weeks.

"Further, the secretary has no hesitation in saying that the important advantages of an earlier opening of navigation on the river St. Lawrence ought to induce the prompt removal of the existing statutory obstacle, which prevents experiments and operations that might be beneficial to the trade of the cities and towns from Quebec upwards, as well as to the foreign commerce of the Dominion."

The document contains much valuable information; and although it has been somewhat vigorously assailed, the facts remain,—its principal conclusions having been sustained in a resolution adopted by the Quebec Board of Trade, as follows:—"That in the opinion of this meeting the navigation of the River St. Lawrence opposite the city of Quebec, or at any other point, should not be interfered with by any law, and that if any such law exists it should be repealed with all convenient speed."

CATTLE EXPORT.

The cattle export trade goes on steadily increasing year by year, although there were not many sheep exported this year as last. 56,643 head of cattle and 63,143 sheep were shipped this year, against 50,345 head of cattle and 102,347 sheep last year, and 28,491 head of cattle and 94,590 sheep in 1884. Other articles of export require no special notice. So far as I know, there are no missing ships from this port this year, or ships lost by being overloaded, or from shifting of cargo.

CURRENTS AND TIDES IN THE GULF.

There was another subject of very great interest brought under consideration of the council last fall, viz: the necessity of making arrangements for a series of observations in the gulf and lower St. Lawrence relating to currents, tides, etc. It was considered to be of vital importance to shipping and commercial interests that such work should be immediately undertaken for the purpose of furnishing information to be added to existing charts, and steps were taken with a view to pressing the matter upon the attention of the Dominion government.

GRAIN STORAGE.

The anticipated completion of the Canadian Pacific railway during the year 1885, the storing of grain from Winnipeg and the North-West in elevators at Port Arthur, to be brought down on the opening of navigation, and the erection of elevators at the eastern portion of the harbor, justify the hope that during the coming season there will be a large increase in the shipment of grain at the Port of Montreal.

FIRE RECORD.

ONTARIO.—Grafton, Jan. 4th.—The Skelter Valley woollen mills of Calder & Graham were burned down. Loss placed at \$12,000, insurance \$5,500.—Meaford, 1st.—Dwelling of Jno. Taylor, St. Vincent, burned on Christmas day, partly insured.—Kirkton, 2nd.—Sparling's flour mill and machinery destroyed.—Belleville, 7th.—W. J. Hunter's brick building damaged \$300, covered in National. Fish, laundryman, losses \$2,000, insured for \$1,400 in Western.—Columbus, 7th.—Building of Mrs. Howden burned, incendiary suspected.—Forest, Jan. 14.—A fire broke out in the rear of Harrison's furniture shop in Edgar's frame block, and eight buildings were destroyed. The loss on the buildings and stock is about \$8,000 partially insured.—Alliston, Jan. 14.—Shed, and hall in rear of Dominion hotel, and John Stewart's stable were burned. Stewart lost four horses. Insurance small.—Tara, Jan. 14.—A disastrous fire destroyed Vindusens & Shanons block.