

that a large increase in the capital is contemplated, and that the details for joint working between the company and the Northern and the Pacific Junction railways have been completed. A confirmation of report, together with the particulars, is awaited.

#### MAILS AND FREIGHT FOR EUROPE.

Louisbourg has more than once been spoken of as the objective point on the Atlantic to be reached by the Canadian Pacific railway. If there were any object in getting the longest railway haul for the produce of the West, this would be intelligible. But railways, under pressure of competition, are obliged to reach the ocean by the nearest route: it is a prime condition of success. To do otherwise is to work against nature, to enter on an impossible competition of rail against water. It is perhaps natural that there should be a desire to continue the Canadian Pacific railway to Louisbourg; but if that place were made the chief Atlantic terminus, the road would be seriously handicapped, by having to prolong its haul in competition with Atlantic navigation.

If Louisbourg were made the chief Atlantic port of the Canadian Pacific, Halifax and, louder still, St. John, would complain that the longest route was taken. But if an objection lies against the longest route, as it undoubtedly does, except for the rapid carrying of the mail, the conclusion must be in favor of the shortest route, though we should land by it at a foreign port. It is not treason to do business at a foreign port; the operation involves no transfer of allegiance, no weakening of national ties. The objection to going to a foreign port is that a national railway could not consistently end there. We built the Canadian Pacific, it is said, for the purpose of having a line through our own territory, to the Pacific ocean, since such a line would render us independent of foreign caprice and tend to strengthen our nationality. This is true, though it is not quite the whole truth. Something more than this had to be done. We had to make our interior country accessible, and this was possible only by building a railway; does it follow that we must not reach the Atlantic ocean otherwise than through our own country all the way? The necessity of having a road on our own territory, by which we can, in case of need, reach the Atlantic, was one of the first wants felt under confederation; and to supply it we built the Intercolonial railway at a cost of something like forty millions of dollars. Being in possession of this national line, it does not follow that it would be wise to refuse the liberty of reaching the ocean, for commercial purposes by the shortest route; to refuse to do so would be a folly for which we should have to pay a heavy penalty.

If we are to establish a fast mail service with England it is plain that we must use the route which can be got over in the shortest time. But in the carrying of produce we must take the shortest rail route. It is a necessity of our position, against which no claim of an artificial character can stand. The produce of the west, unless it should

go by Hudson's Bay, must reach the Atlantic, otherwise, by the nearest route. The competition of India in the production of wheat makes this absolutely necessary; on any other terms it may become a question whether we can compete at all, though the danger of things being carried to this extremity is perhaps not great. From Montreal to Portland the distance is only 287 miles; from Montreal to Halifax, by the short line, 714, and to St. John 463 miles. It is quite consistent with our allegiance as British subjects, and our duty as Canadians, to conduct our commerce on the best terms; indeed it is our bounden duty to do so. It is not, and cannot be our duty, to take the longest route, when the shortest is open to us. And it must be remembered that the course of the movement of freight is independent of the will of the government. No doubt the short route might be closed against us, in the improbable contingency of war, or even as a consequence of a quarrel with the United States over tariffs or fisheries; but this is very unlikely to happen, and if it did, we could fall back on our reserved internal lines of communication. There is no inconsistency in providing ourselves with an intercolonial railway, and carrying our international commerce over the shortest route to the Atlantic; there is no necessary connection between the necessity of having an interior line of railway in the west and making the most of the liberty of reaching the Atlantic through a foreign territory. We should not feel comfortable, and in fact we should not be safe, if this were the only line: the means of independence, in case of emergency is indispensable; but where two facilities are open to us we are under no obligation to make continuous use of the lesser of the two. A stage coach would be a good thing in the event of a break down of a railway; but it would be illogical and extremely inconvenient to make constant use of a stage coach, merely because it was available, to the neglect of railway facilities.

The future of St. John and Halifax are, in our opinion, in any case, assured; and the despondency which casts a gloom over their future is an enemy which it is desirable above everything to dispel. But these cities cannot expect that western commerce will take a circuitous route for the mere pleasure of passing through them; the affinities of commerce are not gratified at the cost of unreasonable and impossible sacrifices. The same reasons which will prevent Louisbourg cutting the cities out, as the last point eastward of the Canada Pacific, for the shipment of produce, will prevent them taking the precedence of American ports which are nearer the interior. It is a question of geography, and the best solution of it is quite consistent with the duty which we owe as subjects of Queen Victoria and which we have to discharge as inhabitants of Canada.

But between the best route for a rapid mail service and the best route for the carriage of freight, there is a difference which is not always taken into account. The best mail route is that which has the longest railway and the shortest ocean distances; while the best freight route is that which

has the shortest rail and the longest water distances. Freight will therefore not follow the mail, and it is a delusion to suppose that any Atlantic city which could secure the mail service would also secure the bulk of the freight. If a railway extended to Louisbourg, to Louisbourg the mail would go, if the mail service were done in the best way. But freight would not consent to pay a heavy penalty for the pleasure of accompanying the mail. It is folly to say that it makes no difference whether freight be hauled 2000 or 3000 miles; the cost of the extra haul is so great that, where competition is keen, the difference may be fatal to the longer route. We do not, we confess, understand why Portland should be made an Atlantic mail port for Canada, when Halifax is so much nearer to Europe.

#### GRAIN IMPORT AND EXPORT.

It is not usual, as newspapers have had occasion to learn, for the Ottawa authorities to make public official statistics of a particular fiscal year until after the first meeting of Parliament subsequent to the close thereof. But we find in a letter written to the *Mail* by Mr. Lawder, of Whitby, particulars of the Dominion exports and imports of grain for the year ended 30th June, 1886, which he says he got from official sources. We compare them, below, with those of the previous year:—

##### IMPORTS OF GRAIN.

	Fiscal year 1886.	Fiscal year 1885.
Barley, bush.....	8,212	14,717
Malt " .....	20,387	22,720
Wheat " .....	2,273,230	3,128,143
Flour of Wheat bbls....	215,391	565,562
Indian Corn, bush.....	4,528,878	3,508,529
Oats " .....	220,001	314,922
Peas " .....	4,298	2,739

##### EXPORTS OF GRAIN.

	Fiscal year 1886.	Fiscal year 1885.
Barley, bush.....	8,554,302	9,067,395
Malt " .....	284,443	374,961
Wheat " .....	5,705,874	5,423,805
Wheat Flour, bbls.....	415,397	161,054
Maize, bush.....	2,667,401	2,007,674
Oats " .....	4,215,329	2,359,002
Peas " .....	3,219,159	2,698,778

The value of these breadstuffs—which of course are mainly the produce of the harvest of 1884 and 1885 respectively—is very great. The money value placed upon them in the *Blue Book* for 1885 is nearly sixteen millions of dollars, (\$15,827,702;) that for last year has not yet been made public. But the number of bushels of grain or its equivalent, exported, allowing  $4\frac{1}{2}$  bushels of wheat to a barrel of flour, is found to be 25,061,905 as compared with 22,092,669 bushels in 1885.

#### STEAMERS AND THEIR EARNINGS.

It is not a small undertaking, nowadays, to make profit out of floating freight craft, sail or steam, whether on the lakes or on the ocean. So numerous have such craft become, the high seas being dotted or the harbors filled with "free lances" in addition to the many great liners, that it has for a year or two been a common complaint amongst ocean freight-carrying ship owners that they can no longer make