

CARRIER'S LIABILITY.—The plaintiffs in a suit in the United States' Courts, New York, delivered to the American Express Company at Syracuse a trunk, the contents of which they now value at \$4,173, for transportation to New York. The receipt taken for the trunk contained the following stipulations. "This Company is not to be held liable for any loss or damage by fire, nor in any event shall this Company be held responsible, nor shall any demand be made upon them beyond the sum of fifty dollars, at which sum said property is hereby valued, unless the just and true value thereof is stated herein." The receipt did not state the value of the trunk and contents, nor was it shown that the agent of the defendant knew the value. The property was forwarded via the New York Central and Hudson River Ry. Co., through the negligence of whose employees the car containing the express company's goods was thrown off the track and a fire ensued which destroyed the trunk and all its contents. The question in dispute was whether the express company was relieved from all responsibility by reason of the stipulations, and if not whether it was liable for more than \$50. It was laid down by the Court as settled law that common carriers cannot relieve themselves from liability for negligence either by notice or special contract, though they may by special contract with the shipper stipulate with mon law liability as is not inconsistent with their essential duties to the public. They cannot therefore exonerate themselves from liability for the act of their own agents, but may from the acts or misconduct of persons over whom they have no authority or control, actual or legal. The railway company being the agents of the defendant, it was held he was liable notwithstanding the stipulation against liability for fire. This liability was, however, limited by the Court to the sum of fifty dollars, it being held that the carrier had a right to exact fair information as to the value of the property confided to his care and that any concealment of such information disentitled the shipper to claim more than the amount named in the receipt.

LA BANQUE VILLE MARIE.—The meeting of the shareholders of the Banque Ville Marie, held on the 3rd inst., and called for the purpose of electing three liquidators, has resulted, unexpectedly, in a decision to resume business, by a vote of 2,382 against 1,574 in favor of liquidation. The capital to-day is about \$600,000 at par; outside liabilities, \$279,054, against which the bank has assets in notes discounted, etc., \$827,462; real estate \$100,000, besides about \$50,000 in current deposits, which is really due to the Bank by the parties to whose credit these deposits stand. It will thus be seen that there is a nominal surplus of close upon \$100,000, but to make matters still sader, it is the intention to apply for power to reduce the capital so as to permit of dividends being resumed. The process of realization, which has been going on since the bank's stoppage, has resulted favorably, as evidenced by the reduction of the outside liabilities from \$964,-

787 to \$279,054 at the present date. The bank's doors are now open for business, and Mr. G. H. Dumesnil will replace Mr. Fauteux as cashier. The directors seem confident of a favorable future for the bank, and it will be well if their expectations are realized, but it may reasonably be questioned if the still over-filled banking field warrants their fond anticipations.

—"The City of Three Rivers as a sea port," is the title of a seventy page pamphlet just published by M. Georges Balcer, Consular Agent for France, at that port, which is situated mid way between Quebec and Montreal. It is claimed for that place that: "Her position, near Lake St. Peter, on the north shore of the River St. Lawrence and at the mouth of the large river St. Maurice, has the particular advantage of being at the head of the natural deepwater navigation on the St. Lawrence, and of commanding the vast territory of the St. Maurice River, whose superficies exceed 200,000 square miles." The vessels cleared from Three Rivers in 1874 numbered 57, of 33,000 tons, all lumber laden. During 1875, 1876 and 1877, her exports continued to be of lumber alone, in diminished quantities to Britain and the continent of Europe, and to South America, South Africa, and Australia. In 1878 her shipments by sea were per ten vessels of 7,000 tons, British, Canadian, German and Norwegian, which in addition to lumber carried phosphate. The shipments of 1879 consisted of lumber and phosphate to the value of \$184,000 in twenty-six vessels of 17,000 tons, to the countries named above and to the West Indies. It is only fair to add, however, that many of the vessels loading at Three Rivers, cleared from the Quebec Custom House, and so do not show as leaving the former port. It is claimed for the port that it is a favorable one for lumber or cattle lading into ocean vessels, and that harbor expenses are smaller than at other St. Lawrence cities. This may be. At the same time, we do not think that the facilities for rapid loading or discharge exists at Three Rivers as they do at larger cities, a disadvantage which time and enterprise may remove.

—Mr. Plimsoll's efforts in England, in behalf of sailors and sea-faring men exposed by the rapacity of some ship owners to more than the ordinary dangers of the deep, have resulted in the framing of an act for the better security of grain cargoes being placed before the legislature. A return published in connection with this bill, shows that between the years 1873 and 1880, twenty-six steamships laden wholly or partially with grain foundered at sea, and twenty-four were reported as missing, and during the same period 100 grain-laden sailing vessels foundered and 111 were reported as missing. In the winter months of the years 1872 to 1880, sixty-two grain laden steamers were lost. The great proportion of these losses was, in Mr. Plimsoll's opinion, owing to the grain being laden in bulk. The planks that were sometimes put

in to prevent the cargo shifting were inadequate. At San Francisco, it appears, the underwriters accepted for vessels loaded with grain in sacks half the insurance charged for vessels loaded in bulk for a voyage from New York.

—Serious complaint is made among business people, about the scarcity of small change. Indeed there is so little small coin in circulation that the money collected in churches and public places commands a premium of two or three per cent. While this is true of Canada the Californians are burthened with too much silver and are now anxiously discussing the question of what they will do with it. It is proposed to relieve the plethora by transporting the excess over the capacity of the mint and sub-treasury in San Francisco to some point in the Eastern States. At 1 per cent. for transportation \$22,800 would be exhausted in moving \$2,280,000, the coinage of a single month, and there would be nowhere to put it after it arrived. If things go on in this way much longer the cart-wheel dollars will be a worse nuisance than the iron money of Lyncurgus.

—We have a letter from the Secretary of the Mechanics Institute in Belleville, stating in reference to an item in our last issue about a manufacturer giving his apprentices free access to the Galt Institute, that Messrs. J. M. Walker & Co., of Belleville, make it a rule that each apprentice, during his term of apprenticeship, shall have free access to the Belleville Mechanics' Institute. "This rule," says our correspondent, "They adopted three years ago; so that Mr. Cowan is not the first man who adopted the plan of presenting tickets for the Mechanics' Institute to his apprentices for their mutual benefit."

It gives us pleasure to hear of instances of the sort; it will be all the more satisfactory and the more generally beneficial if there are in Canada—as there may well be—a number more who take the same course as the two manufacturing firms named. We learn that the Northern Railway Company regularly pays for the admittance to the Toronto Mechanics Institute of all apprentices in its workshops. Some of the banks, too, and the telegraph companies, have an arrangement by which their employees, or groups of them, are admitted to the use of the library at a slight reduction in rate.

—A statement is compiled by Mr. Belleau of the custom house, Quebec, showing that for this season up to the end of June last there had been an increase over last season in the tonnage of vessels entering that port of 63,710 tons. The figures for 1880 were 349,016 tons in 341 vessels, which employed 8,269 men. Of these vessels 241 were British, 67 Norwegian and Swedish. The remaining four were German and French. The return of vessels outward for this season was 178,276 tons, being a decrease of 16,931 tons when compared with the same period of 1879.