

long letters to the *Workman*, of Orillia. He proved quite conclusively that it was as good an Order as the A.O.U.W., and that it was entitled to the patronage of Workmen because founded by a high officer of that body in Pennsylvania, and introduced into Canada by other high officers. How many years it has been in existence, or how many sums of \$250 or \$2,000 it has paid, we do not know, as it seems to have made no reports to any of the departments. But it had met with great success among the fraternities, and many of them will be sorry to learn of its sudden collapse. A circular from the officers states that the assets are \$804,943.17, and gives the doubtful assurance that at least the actual money paid in by the present members will be returned to them by the receiver.

THE TRAFFIC OF THE GREAT LAKES.

When one reads, in statistical works or elsewhere, the figures of United States' tonnage, he rarely learns therefrom how large a proportion of the total capacity of American steam or sail craft consists nowadays of the large and swift craft that plough the great chain of navigable fresh waters from Superior to Ontario. It will surprise many to be told that the American tonnage of the lakes is about one fourth of the whole tonnage of that nation. At the close of November, 1891, the total tonnage of the entire merchant marine of the United States, including all the seaboard, the rivers and lakes, was 4,684,759 tons, and the share contributed by the lakes was 1,154,870 tons.

These figures are taken from the Report on Internal Commerce, issued on 30th September, 1892, by the Chief of the Bureau of Statistics, Washington. That official compares the number, size and value of lake craft at different periods, showing how vast an increase has taken place of late years in the dimensions and cost of these inland carriers. Going back to 1849, when high pressure side-wheel steamers carried the passengers from Buffalo to Detroit and westward that are now whirled along by rail, and when picturesque brigs and schooners sailed along the lakes and connecting rivers where now they are ignominiously towed, we find the tonnage but small, as measured by these days of big things, for a 700-tonner was a large boat then. In that year 60,562 in steamers and 101,080 in sailers formed the total tonnage of the lake fleet; increased in the year 1862 to 125,620 and 257,690 tons respectively (350 steamers, 1,152 sailers). Coming down to the year 1886, we find what is called the business fleet of the lakes—presumably those which ply long routes or carry passengers, as distinguished from despised fishing craft, sand-scoops and the like—stated at 1,997 vessels of 634,625 tons, costing \$30,597,000. This "business fleet," by the way, had increased by the close of last year till it numbered 2,125 vessels, 870,980 tons, at a cost of \$57,054,000, and the total tonnage, as we have said, including all sorts and conditions of craft upon the lakes, to 1,154,870 tons. The cost per ton had increased greatly, too, doubtless because iron and steel had

meanwhile come into use as building materials.

LAKE TONNAGE AND COST—DIFFERENT YEARS.

	Number of Craft.	Tonnage.	Cost per ton.
1849.....	161,832	\$46 58
1862.....	1,502	383,319	30 81
1886.....	1,997	634,625	48 21
1891.....	2,125	870,981	65 50

It is a very significant fact, as showing the growth of steam tonnage in particular, that the value of steam vessels on the lakes in 1886 was \$22,047,200 and in 1891 it was \$49,543,750. The demands of the iron and copper trade of Lake Superior, not less than those of the grain trade of Lake Michigan ports, led to a steady increase in the size and speed of steamers, and to the deepening of waterways and harbors to twenty feet.

The steam tonnage built on the lakes during the last five years exceeds that built in all other parts of the United States by 69,910. There are 272 lake steamers from 1,000 to 2,500 tons, and an aggregate tonnage of 439,787 tons. On the seaboard and rivers there are 207 such steam vessels with an aggregate tonnage of 308,694 tons, or an excess in favor of the lakes of 65 steamers and 131,093 tons. The average tonnage of all lake vessels is 349 tons and on the seaboard 165 tons. A table will best show the changes in sail to steam craft in five years on the lakes:

	Sail.	Tons.	Steam.	Tons.
1886..	1,060 craft,	309,767	937 craft,	324,885
1891..	888 "	310,393	1,237 "	560,388

To illustrate the increasing size of steamers and their cost it is stated that on Dec. 1, 1891, there were 89 steel vessels, representing 127,624 tons, and \$14,502,500. All but nineteen are steamers, and their average value exceeds \$190,000 each. Some steamers carry 2,500 tons burthen and run 17 miles an hour. Forty-five new vessels will be ready for the season of 1892. Forty are steamers and thirty-two are steel. Their value is stated at \$4,896,000.

It has been estimated that 28,000,000 net tons of freight passes the Lime Kiln crossing of the Detroit River annually. We are told that during the year 1890, 3,500 Canadian vessels, with a tonnage of 350,000, passed through that river.

It is not necessary to give all the figures of this report on the subject, but we may simply say that the tonnage passing through the strait of the Detroit is three times greater than that through the Suez Canal: 21,684,000 tons through the first and 6,890,084 through the last, in 1890. The freight tonnage passing through the Detroit River for ten years is shown by a table, as under:

Year.	Number of vessels.	Registered tonnage.
1881.....	35,888	17,572,240
1882.....	35,199	17,872,182
1883.....	40,385	17,695,174
1884.....	38,742	18,045,949
1885.....	34,921	16,777,828
1886.....	38,261	18,968,065
1887.....	38,125	18,864,250
1888.....	31,404	19,009,060
1889.....	32,415	19,646,000
1890.....	35,640	21,684,000

Such figures as these contrast strangely with those of lake traffic sixty years ago, as quoted by "Maxime Maritime" a fortnight ago in one of his series of papers in our columns.

TALKING OVER MATTERS.

The first meeting this fall of the dry goods section of the Toronto Board of Trade was held a few days ago. There was a good representation of city wholesale firms, the members of which, while they did not issue any ultimatums, discussed, in an informal way, several topics of interest to the trade. First there was the matter of discounts for cash. These, it was thought, were quite out of proportion to the present value of money, and there was a feeling that a reduction in this respect would be wise. The same reason was put forward why banks should lower the rate on paper under discount. Both in this country and in England the supply of money is most ample, and the current discount rate does not, it was claimed, bear an equitable ratio thereto.

The vexed question of the practice by many retailers of returning goods was taken up. There could be no objection to a customer returning an improperly filled order, but to send back goods which the buyer, upon second thought, concluded he did not need, was annoying in the extreme. If a man buys a house, which he finds later on that he would have been wiser not to have bought, he cannot throw it unceremoniously back upon the hands of the seller. He must make the best of an unwise purchase. Not only do some storekeepers return goods after such fashion, but they even re-ship them in such a condition as to considerably affect the value in a second sale. It often occurs, too, that no previous intimation of his intention to return the goods is given by the retailer. The wholesaler very naturally thinks that he might first be consulted in the matter.

A member was of opinion that the present manner of passing goods through the Custom House was in some respects susceptible of improvement. For instance, the clerk of a wholesale firm makes out, as is the rule, duplicate entry sheets, filling in, so far as he knows, the proper duty, specific and ad valorem, opposite each item. He takes the firm's cheque for the total sum to be paid, but when the papers pass the scrutiny of the clerk in the Custom House it frequently happens that a large sum has to be returned to the firm owing to unavoidable errors in the entry sheet. As this refund is made to the clerk in the form of bills, and as both entry sheets are retained by the Customs' authorities, the wholesale house is quite at the mercy of a person weak enough to be tempted into dishonesty. It also leaves the door open for collusion on the part of the clerks behind and before the Custom House counter. The firm has no means of knowing what the refund was. One safeguard would be for the cashier at the Custom House to give a cheque for the amount to be returned; and it seems only a business-like precaution to make out triplicate duty papers, the importer retaining one with all the corrections entered thereon by the Customs' clerk. Endeavors will no doubt be made to have this defect remedied.

Taking a view of the situation as a whole, it was the opinion of the members that the condition of the wholesale dry