

though some promoters of the enterprise are still sanguine in their expectations of success.

Recent English papers have been largely devoted to the discussion, chiefly in the shape of correspondence, of the dock labourers' strike. A good deal of sympathy has been expressed for the labourers, whose families, notwithstanding the help of various societies and the contributions of the benevolent, have suffered much distress. That is the worst feature of this mode of solving industrial problems. The penalty for the wrong-doing (wherever it may lie) falls upon the innocent—upon unoffending women and children. According to a report issued some time ago by the United States Commissioner of the National Bureau of Labour, the aggregate cost to the country of the strikes and lock-outs of six years was more than ninety millions of dollars, two-thirds of which enormous sum were forfeited by the workmen engaged in them. The worst year for these industrial wars was 1886, during which there were no less than 1,412 strikes, involving 9,893 establishments. In nearly four-fifths of the six years' strikes, the cause had to do with either wages or hours of work. The refusal to increase wages on demand occasioned 42.44 per cent. of the whole; declining to comply with the request for shorter hours led to 19.45 per cent.; the attempt to reduce wages 7.75 per cent.; refusal of higher wages with shorter hours was responsible for 7.57 per cent.

The figures indicating the results of these strikes are of special interest as they show the basis of more or less reasonable hope, founded on experience, which sustains the striker in his painfully self-imposed idleness. The proportion of total failure, when the workmen had to return to work after losing their time without gaining an iota of their demands, was 39.89 per cent. of the whole. Partial success—a compromise—followed in a percentage of 13.45 cases. The percentage of success was 46.59. This may be considered a large ratio, capital being apparently so much better equipped for such a struggle than labour. But public opinion, public convenience, the nature of the industry affected, and other important factors tend to equalize the strength of the belligerents; and when the claims of the strikers are obviously just, employers are forced to yield. It is, doubtless, the remembrance of what persistence has effected in the past, as well as confidence in the justice of their cause and assurance of some share, at least, of public sympathy, that inspires many fresh strikes and encourages the strikers to persevere till their end is gained. It is to be hoped that the result of the discussion in England will be the abandonment of a system so injurious to the interests of those concerned, as well as of the public at large, and the acceptance by employers and employed of some plan of friendly arbitration.

#### BY RAIL TO HUDSON'S BAY.

The rumoured project of a railway from Sault Ste. Marie to the head of James Bay is not altogether a new project. In the evidence before the Select Committee on the Navigation of Hudson's Bay, Dr. Bell was examined as to his opinion regarding the practicability of a line north of Lake Superior, as well as of one from Winnipeg to Fort Churchill or York Factory. As to the feasibility of the former he said that, as far as he could judge as a civil engineer, there would be no engineering difficulties. The country from Lake Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay—either to Churchill or York—ap-

peared easy for the construction of a railway. His actual experience of the country was derived from having traversed the distances in question, mainly in a boat, and observing the land on both sides of him as he proceeded. As to a line from Lake Superior to James Bay he thought it would be fairly easy of construction. The country is tolerably well adapted for such work in the direction of the rivers. Dr. Bell was also of opinion that the Bay and Strait were open long enough each year to justify the using of those waters for ordinary commerce. He considers the harbours of James Bay to be fairly good—though he acknowledges that at Moose Factory there is only a roadstead. Mr. Walter Dickson, of Lake Francis, Manitoba, takes a less favorable view of the harbour accommodation. Indeed he seems to think that Churchill was the only harbour on Hudson's Bay worthy of the name. Mr. Dickson is thoroughly in agreement with Dr. Bell as to the practicability of the lines by both proposed routes, though he would prefer the western to the eastern side of Lake Winnipeg. He also confirms Dr. Bell's statements as to the great value of the fisheries, fur supply and minerals in the country around Hudson's Bay. The country between James Bay and the Lakes both explorers pronounce rich in timber of good quality. There are also, Mr. Dickson says, about the Moose, Abbitibi and other rivers, areas of fine land, while the climate is as mild as that on Lake Huron.

#### THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

Even apart from the recent elections, which have made the month of September memorable in a memorable year, there is much in the state of France which naturally attracts the attention of the rest of the civilized world. France has one great merit—it is never dull. In triumph or defeat, whatever régime or dynasty may prevail, it is ever, to the student of human progress, one of the most interesting of nations. Even the faults of the people have a certain fascination which is wanting in the virtues of some other communities. Their outbursts of passion may be absurd or terrible, but they are sure to be picturesque. Grave writers of all parties have striven in vain to give a reason for the tumultuous fervour of admiration which Gen. Boulanger succeeded in arousing in the breasts of a large section of his compatriots, but even those who sympathized with the popular feeling were not quite able to account for it. What proportions the furore would have assumed, had not the Government managed to frighten the brave General out of the country and to condemn him for serious misdemeanors it is vain to ask. The statuesque figure on the black charger has lost its magnetism. The hatred of France's present rulers, to which Boulangerism owed a share at least of its temporary success, has not, however, diminished. With the bulk of the Opposition—the Orleanist and Bonapartist element—it is the Republic itself which is the object of hostility. The remainder of it is composed of professed Republicans, whose antagonism rests on other grounds. The Republic has now resisted the assaults of its foes for more than nineteen years. It has thus shown itself the most enduring administrative fabric that France has had during the last hundred years. Hitherto, neither monarchy nor democracy, in that period of frequent change, has been strong enough to last for twenty years. The first Empire, which was the inconsistent goal of the early Republic, closed its brilliant de-

cade in the disaster and exile of its illustrious founder. The two reigns which followed the Bourbon Restoration were comprised within fifteen years, and between the abdication of Charles X. and the fall of Louis Philippe less than eighteen years intervened. The Republic of 1848, of which Louis Napoleon was elected president, ended with the *coup d'état*, and then, after a year's experience of the new constitution, the Second Empire was proclaimed on the 2nd of December, 1852. Eighteen years later Napoleon III. was in exile and France was once more a Republic.

That Pius IX should have exceeded "the years of Peter" was by many looked upon as an omen of evil. That the present Republican régime in France should have shown more vitality than any form of government that preceded it since the downfall of Louis XVI. may, perhaps, be accepted as a promise of permanence. The reigns of the Bourbon kings before the Revolution, which shortened the years of the last of them, were remarkably long. In a century and a half Canada, while under French control, had yielded allegiance to only three sovereigns—the last of whom sat on the throne for twenty-five years after the death of Montcalm. When Quebec was founded, Henry IV. had less than two years to live. His successor, Louis XIII., reigned a third of a century. Then came the seventy-two years of Louis le Grand and the fifty-nine of his great-grandson, for forty-four of which Canada was a French province. That nineteen years of uninterrupted Republican rule should be regarded as evidence of stability shows how completely France has broken with the Bourbon régime. The contrast between the past and the present is still more marked when it is recalled that during those nineteen years France has had four Presidents and twenty-five ministries.

It may, of course, be urged that the very fact of having stood the strain of so many recurring crises is a proof of the elasticity and endurance of French democracy. If it has tided over so many perils and defied so many menaces in the past, why should it not continue to maintain its supremacy against all foes and rivals in the future? To this question perhaps the often quoted saying that it is the unexpected that always happens may be a not inappropriate answer. Almost every change of system that has followed the Revolution has been brought about with a suddenness that sometimes surprised even those who were behind the scenes. In the beginning of June, 1870, to go no further back, who could have foretold the doom that was impending over the Empire and over France? The throne of Louis Napoleon seemed more firmly established after the plebiscite of that year than does the Republic over which M. Carnot presides to-day. Yet a few weeks precipitated the conflict that left that throne vacant and France a spoil for victorious invaders. If, however, we may judge by present indications, there is no immediate fear of a catastrophe to the Republic. The mistakes of 1870 are not likely to be repeated, and with ordinary vigilance a *coup d'état* is just now impracticable. Moreover, the longer the actual régime lasts, the less desirous will the mass of the people be to see it changed for something else. Imperfect though it is, there is less risk, less hardship to the nation as a whole in putting up with its defects than there would be in encouraging a revolt of which no one could see the upshot. France has already had too much of change. What the country needs is the assurance of tranquillity at home and peace abroad, with such reforms of administration as may tend to