

recently from the engineering supplement to the London Times, which shows that concrete can be used to a considerable extent in the construction of vessels. On the conflict between steel and wood an English marine authority, the London Shipping World, says:

"We admittedly view the subject from the outside, and with an imperfect knowledge of the facts, but, on the whole, we think the compromise now reached is sensible and businesslike. The construction of wooden ships appeals to sentiment and popular imagination as an easy and quick way to remedy the existing shipping shortage, but in reality it is neither easy nor quick, nor is it economical. The timber is there undoubtedly, but it is unseasoned, and before it can be used for ship construction probably as long a period must elapse as would be necessary for the casting and assembling of steel plates. Moreover, the number of ship carpenters trained to construct wooden ships must be relatively small, and it is no use imagining that a house carpenter can with advantage be immediately employed in a shipyard. If, indeed, the total number of shipyard workers is limited in America, as it is here, then the case for concentrating all their energies on steel vessels cannot be seriously challenged; and as a large part of the building of steel ships can be done outside the shipyards themselves, then on the score of speed alone the steel ship is an easy winner. At sea she is also incomparably the better vessel. She will last longer in all probability, will carry more and travel faster, and will be by far the more economical cargo carrier."

After Weary Years

Sir Robert Perks, M.P., in a meeting of the Channel Tunnel Company in London a few days ago, Sir Perks remarked that he was the only survivor of the room of the 20 proprietors who in 1881 signed the articles of association of the company. One of these days Sir Robert will be found making a somewhat similar statement at a meeting of our own Georgian Bay Canal Company. One does not hear much about that enterprise to-day, but the charter is outstanding, and Sir Robert Perks, if we mistake not, is its principal owner. He evidently likes to keep his large projects alive, so that when the world moves far enough ahead there will be an organization ready to grapple with them.

Commercially the arguments in favor of the construction of a tunnel under the Channel, between England and France, were always very strong. There is an immense volume of traffic between Great Britain and the continent. Wherever such traffic is broken by the existence of a ferry, railway men will always strive for a continuous all rail line. The distance of the Channel crossing is less than twenty miles. The surveys that have been made have not indicated any insuperable engineering difficulties. But military men have hitherto set their faces resolutely against the tunnel. The separation from the continent, which, to the railway manager and the trader was an obstacle and an evil, was to the British military leader a blessing. The Island Kingdom must not cease to be an island. The sea was England's protection; let England not lose such protection by resorting to submarine rail connection. France was at a respectful distance, and not always in an amiable frame of mind towards England. Better let things alone. Cultivate good relations with France,

of course, but keep her at arm's length. This reasoning of the military man prevailed, and, though spasmodic efforts were made to revive the subject, the Channel tunnel scheme made no progress. The company doubtless kept a legal existence, and found money enough to pay for the privilege of an annual meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel in London, where the directors of so many British corporations meet their shareholders. The world at large only smiled at the tunnel scheme.

The situation has now changed. The Frenchman is no longer regarded as a dangerous fellow. In the big business of the world to-day the Frenchman is playing a part that challenges John Bull's admiration and affection. No longer is there a desire at Dover or Folkestone to keep the French folk at Calais or Boulogne at arm's length. So the Channel Tunnel Company's annual meeting takes on a more interesting shape. The Chairman, Baron Emile Beaumont d'Erlanger, is able to take a cheerful view of the situation, and almost invite his shareholders to the first rail excursion from London to Paris. Sir Robert Perks becomes pleasantly reminiscent of the early days of the company.

"The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said the board had, since the war began, strictly adhered to the policy that they should remain expectant and quiescent, and not endeavour to make capital out of the lesson which had been taught the nation by the war in order to promote the interests of the Channel Tunnel and to advocate its cause. He firmly believed that this patriotic attitude had borne fruit, and that public opinion had itself done in a far better and stronger way what the board might have attempted to do. Now, after 30 years,

shown a more decided favour of the construction of the tunnel than in the last twelve months. The question had been taken up very seriously in Parliament, and a committee had been formed under Mr. Fell to advocate the construction of the Channel Tunnel, and he believed it was the most numerous and strongest committee, composed as it was of members of every party, that had ever been formed in the House of Commons. . . . They had been pushing a stone up a mountain for 30 years, sometimes gaining ground, and sometimes feeling the stone rolling back upon them; and had always kept the flag of the Channel Tunnel flying. He believed they had now reached the summit of the ridge, and that they would in a short time see their endeavours crowned with success."

A Successful Business Man

LONDON has just seen the funeral of a man who, in his own line, exhibited a remarkable talent for business, and rendered a valuable service to the community. We refer to Sir Joseph Lyons, who died a few days ago at the age of 70. Sir Joseph was something of an artist in his younger days. He ceased to paint, he said, not as many artists do, from lack of customers, but because he liked his pictures so well that he found it hard to part with them. His great service to the public was as a caterer, supplying the masses of London with good food at reasonable prices. From small beginnings he developed a system of tea shops which has so grown that there are now over two hundred of them

in London. Then he established several well known restaurants, and later a "no-tip" hotel in the Strand, which has won a prominent place in the hotel list of the great city. "He is a smart chap, but he can't keep a hotel," is an old saying, founded on a knowledge of the ability required to successfully manage a large business of that kind. Mr. Lyons' talent for the efficient management of catering establishments, combined with his sterling character, won the confidence of the financial and general public to such an extent that men were readily found to join him in any new venture that he might undertake. In the midst of his many business activities, he found time for much good work in citizenship, especially in the promotion of healthy recreations for young men and in the military service of the Territorial Association. In 1911 he was knighted, and there was no honor in the list of that day received with more satisfaction by the public than that accorded to the public-spirited Jewish citizen who has just passed away.

The O'Connor Report

NO official document among those lately issued at Ottawa has attracted more attention than the report made by Mr. W. F. O'Connor, K.C., acting for the Department of Labor, respecting the operations of the cold storage companies and the profits of some of the dealers in important articles of food. It is unfortunate that the substance of the report—or what was said to be its substance—was given to the public through the press before the document was available in printed form. Press representatives, who had to make use of a type-written copy on the files of the House of Commons, were not all able to get from it, in a fair summary of its contents, and consequently some of the statements to be found in the first publications are to be at variance with the contents of the document itself. A wiser course would have been to withhold the report until it could be given to the public in printed form.

We published last week a telegram on the subject from Sir Joseph Flavelle, President of the William Davies Company, and Mr. J. H. Fox, the manager of the company, through the advertising columns of the press, presented a lengthy statement of their operations, in answer to Mr. O'Connor's report. There is enough of conflict between Mr. O'Connor and the packing companies to call for further inquiry, and Sir Robert Borden has stated that such further investigation will be held.

At a time when the cost of living has advanced to figures which are a heavy burden to all who are not rich, any suggestion that dealers in foodstuffs are availing themselves of the opportunity to obtain extortionate prices is certain to command interest and to produce indignation. Investigation, therefore, is necessary, and it should be pursued with absolute fairness and a desire to ascertain the truth. It is war-time and war-time conditions inevitably produce high prices. If our food dealers are, as they claim, simply doing business under these conditions and getting no more than a fair profit on their operations, the public must be content to bear the burden as people in other countries are obliged to do. But if dealers are taking advantage of the occasion to make profits that are not fair and reasonable the public should know it upon indisputable evidence, and the services of the Food Controller should be promptly employed to give the consumer the necessary relief. The further investigation that the Government have promised should be prompt and thorough.