

The Railway Rate War. The prediction of an early termination to the transcontinental passenger rate war is persistently maintained; but the road to peace seems to be so long and winding that no one can see the end thereof. Possibly, a treaty between the interested railways will not be signed until the public have become so used to cheap rates that they will demand legislation to maintain what has been shown to be possible. For both the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific have nothing to complain of in the matter of receipts. The former road especially is doing very well. For the first eighteen weeks of the present year the total gain in receipts of the Grand Trunk were stated to have been \$965,000. The advance in Canadian Pacific earnings since the first of the year has been over one and a half millions of dollars. Perhaps the companies concerned in the present conflict of rates are careless of the cost of fighting so long as the improved receipts from the public afford a reason for supposing that travel is induced by cheap fares, in the same way as shop sales are by bargain days. Whatever may be the reason, the merry war continues, despite the meetings of the executive heads of the railways, ostensibly to discuss terms of peace. However, there is now good reason to believe the long-maintained rate-war is virtually over.

The War.

Conflicting as the reports from the seat of war have been, the latest intelligence indicates that the day of desultory, long-range firing at fortifications, and the occasional capture by the attacking fleet of an unarmed merchantman is over. It is regrettable, although every decisive action will hasten the end, that the expected surrender of the Spanish fleet without further bloodshed has not rendered the discussion of terms of surrender and an early declaration of peace possible. Meanwhile, the combatants of both nations are giving exhibitions of the same pluck and heroism which, in all ages, has extorted the admiration of the world. The horrors of war are forgotten in the contemplation of those heroic deeds which human nature wonders at with an intense and heart-thrilling delight.

A splendid exhibition of the resolution which courts danger and is insensible to fear was shown by Lieutenant Hobson and his companions, who are reported to have volunteered to sink their ship, the Merrimac, in the entrance to the cannon swept, torpedo strewn, shark infested harbour of Santiago. Such stories of battle, such daring deeds of brave men must extort our admiration as it did that of Lieutenant Hobson's courteous captor, the Spanish Admiral, Cervera. But the growing signs of the coming serious conflict on sea and shore are fast obscuring the dawn of that wished for day when the warring nations will return to the pursuits of peaceful industry.

A Special Committee.

The special Committee appointed in February last, to enquire into the expenditure of subsidies in aid of the Drummond County Railway, and into all negotiations between the Government of Canada or any member thereof and the Drummond County Railway Company, or any person representing same, relating to the acquiring of the railway by the Government; have presented their second and final report to Parliament. The blue book in question, contains 158 pages, and from the evidence given by the numerous witnesses the investigation has been thorough and exhaustive. Without making much comment upon the result of the inquiry and the expenditure of time and money involved thereby, we may fairly quote from this blue book to prove that the somewhat frequent appointment of these special Committees are too much the outcome of reckless charges and insinuations in parliament and press against the personal integrity of our public men. Such inquiries tend to degrade us in the estimation of others, and the fear of being villified and having unworthy motives imputed as the cause of activity in the performance of public duty is calculated to keep many a good man out of the arena of politics.

On the last page of the report of the Drummond County Railway Committee we find the following:

The Chairman:—I wish to say that I have caused to be brought before the Committee every person who might throw any light on the transaction, and before we close the evidence I would ask members of the Committee who are here to say whether there is any further evidence which they desire to have brought before the Committee. Of course, you are aware that in the press and in the house it was charged that the government collectively as well as certain individual members of the government were guilty of corruption in connection with the purchase of this road. So far as I have been able to see, no evidence of corruption has been adduced.

... If, as Mr. Haggart says, it is a mere matter of policy with which he agrees, the policy of bringing the road into Montreal, then the only difference is as to the price paid, and of course, the question of corruption does not arise at all.

Mr. Haggart.—That was my point of view. We never made any charges of corruption.

* * *

The special Committee, which closed its labours by referring to the want of any evidence of corruption with which the country by this blue book is now informed no one was ever charged, commenced investigating the Drummond County Railway acquisition on March 5th, and on May 20th, they report "that such legislation as may be necessary to sanction the same should be passed at an early date."

Surely Parliament travelled by a most circuitous and expensive road to reach this conclusion as to the honesty of those engaged in the sale and purchase of a railway required for the service of the people.