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Mercantile Summary.

The St. Clair River Oil Co. has, it is reported, struck an oil well at Mersea, near Leamington, at a depth of 1,077 feet, flowing at the rate of 500 barrels per day.

It is stated, apparently on good authority, that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad will build a direct line from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie instead of using the Canadian Northern line between those points.

The Rat Portage Lumber Company's planing mill at Norman Mill, near Kenora, was last week destroyed by fire, together with some \$3,000 worth of lumber. The loss is estimated at \$28,000, covered by insurance.

On Tuesday of last week there was a disastrous fire at Cayley, near Calgary, Alta. Henry's general store and a large proportion of the other buildings of the town were destroyed, including the telegraph office. Henry's loss is partially covered by insurance.

R. C. Sproule, R. A. Grant and others, of Toronto, are the names mentioned in the Canada Gazette as having obtained a charter, under the title of the Canada Lands Improvement Company, to acquire lands in various parts of the Dominion for colonization purposes. It would also advance money and otherwise assist settlers.

The Glasgow shipbuilders have had a good season. A report from that centre says that in the past month they have added thirty vessels of 62,042 tons to the previous total, making the eight months' total 205 vessels of 344,026 tons, figures which have been exceeded only once in the history of the industry—in 1901. As to launches, the thirty with their total of 62,042 tons, compare with sixteen vessels of 22,124 tons the previous month, and twenty-five of 32,151 tons in August, 1904. Over 42,000 tons of new orders were placed with the Clyde builders in the past month.

The High Commissioner in South Africa has cabled to the Canadian authorities that about 500 horses will be required for the South Africa Constabulary between now and February, and he invites tenders under the following conditions. They are to be landed at Durban; inspection and selection of horses to be made by representative of South Africa Constabulary not later than fifteen days after disembarkation; South Africa Constabulary to have full power of rejecting all or any of the consignment on any of the following grounds: unsoundness, unsuitability for work, want of condition, faulty conformation; size, 14.2 to 15.1 hands; five to seven years of age. Must be geldings or mares, the latter to be given preference. Horses should be stout, thick-set, but with quality, and should be about three-quarters thoroughbred. There is said to be a good market for horses in South Africa at present.

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The Monterde's Electric Accumulator Company, Limited, Montreal, has received a charter from the Dominion Government. It will purchase the F. Monterde electrical patents and manufacture and deal in accumulators, motors, dynamos and other electrical machinery. The company's capital stock is placed at \$250,000.

La Société Parisienne d'Installations Artistiques, Limited, is the name of a new company, with headquarters at Montreal and a capital stock of \$100,000, which proposes to build all kinds of private and public residences, and manufacture and instal all sorts of decorations and furniture; also to make and deal in ecclesiastical garments and emblems, etc. D. Raymond and C. H. Branchaud, Montreal, are among the charter members.

The special commissioner of "Commercial Intelligence," our enterprising London contemporary, which is making a special investigation into industrial conditions in Canada, speaks thus of the Nova Scotia Steel Company's plant at Sydney Mines: "Frequent visits to steel plants in Pennsylvania and Ohio have got me into the way of looking in a newly-installed plant for anything in equipment that is novel or represents progress in iron and steel plant practice. The day I spent on the Sydney Mines plant was not without its satisfaction in this respect. There was something new in bye-product coke-oven practice, and also an equipment that was new to me for handling pigs in the cast-house; this equipment had recently been imported from Whitehaven, Cumberland. . . . It will be seen there is an obvious saving of labor over the older methods of drawing coke-ovens. The newer method gets rid of much hot, laborious and brutalizing manual labor, and is thus in line with so much of the mechanical improvement in iron and steel plant practice of the last ten or twelve years. . . . The plant embodies everything that is new up to 1905 and that has stood the test of modern practice."

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