the systems of both the Grand Trunk Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway in Ontario. He was also, with Sir John Macdonald, one of the founders of the Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, and succeeded Sir John Macdonald in its presidency. Before its amalgamation with the Canada Permanent, Mr. Gooderham was also the vice-president of the old Western Canada Loan and Savings Company. Mr. Gooderham was president of the Toronto Hotel Company, the corporation which in the face of many difficulties built the King Edward Hotel, and he had extensive interests in mines in British Columbia.

## MANITOULIN.

We have just given some attention, in another place, to the case of Prince Edward Island, and we have a circular from another island community, complaining of isolation and non-fulfilment of promises. The island of Manitoulin in Lake Huron is said to be the largest island surrounded by fresh water in the world, being 1,500 square miles in extent, it possesses oil and marl areas, and is well adapted for agriculture and grazing. There are sixteen thousand people on the island, whose nearest railway station is twenty-four miles across water and mountain to the main land of Ontario. Four years have passed since a charter was granted to the Manitoulin and North Shore Railway, a subsidiary enterprise of the Clergue Syndicate, which was given subsidies and other assistance on the understanding that railway building would be begun on the island, and communication would be established with the main land.

We are informed by Mr. F. W. Bell, the secretary of a public meeting of citizens held last month at Little Current, that the company in question have "ignored the rights of the residents of this district, and have failed in every way to carry out the object for which the charter was primarily granted." The hardships of the dwellers on the island are recounted: "Scarcely a season passes without travellers between the Island and the mainland sustaining serious loss of property, horses drowned, personal injury, and too frequently loss of life by drowning or perishing by cold. Added to this is the fact that our market is receding, the timber on the shore having been cut and the lumbermen consequently operating north of the C.P.R. line; on account of which distance is precluded the possibility of reaching it except by railway. This leaves us with a market for but six months in the year for our rapidly increasing products, and shuts us out from our natural and best markets."

The memorial of these Manitoulin dwellers sets forth in conclusion a claim for active sympathy. They ask, and it is not an unreasonable request, that we "see that any grants, subsidies, concessions, privileges, or otherwise in the nature of assisting the railways chartered, shall be granted only on condition that the construction of such railroad be commenced within a reasonable, specified time, and that such construction shall begin from a point on the Manitoulin Island; * * * or in the alternative, following the precedent of the Temiskaming Railway, that the Government do construct, equip, and operate, at the public expense, a railroad between such points as in their judgment may be deemed most advisable."

## MONTREAL LETTER.

The wholesale trade is at present experiencing that "quiet feeling," which usually exists prior to the opening of navigation, and the time when the summer railway rates come into operation. That the lull is only temporary is generally accepted, and our merchants look forward with much confidence to a satisfactory spring and summer trade. There is a good demand for call money, and the general rate is 4½ per cent. A pretty extensive loan was asked for from one of our large banks which, however, refused to give it under 4½ per cent. A good demand exists for funds for commercial purposes, and mercantile paper is being discounted at 6 to 6½ and 7 per cent. A feeling exists that the outlook for the maritime trade of Montreal is rather unsatisfactory, the quantity of grain pointing this way for export being much smaller than at the corresponding dates of several previous seasons. It is hoped, however, that with the opening of navigation things will improve, and a fresh impetus be given to all branches of trade.

The weather during the early part of the week has been cold and blustering, with snow and frost; but even this, though unpleasant to the man about town, will have a beneficial effect, as it will check the too rapid growth of vegetation that might be damaged by frosts to be experienced later on. However, snow so late in April indicates, so the weather-wise claim, a long and warm spring, and judging by the sample served out during the past day or so we are tempted to believe that the happy season of spring has really come.

Considerable activity is shown in building operations in Montreal, and Building Inspector Chaussé states that hundreds of handsome buildings are to be erected this summer. One hundred and forty-four building permits were issued in March, and the stated aggregate cost of the work is $489,680.

The civic authorities of Montreal are experiencing some trouble on account of what is claimed to be a clerical error in the draft of a law passed at Quebec two years ago, relating to the taxation of insurance companies doing business in this city. If the contentions of the Royal Insurance Company are maintained, the trouble may result in a loss of a large amount of revenue. According to a by-law based on legislation obtained at Quebec a special tax of one per cent. on the premiums collected by fire insurance companies doing business, and taking risks in this city was imposed, with a maximum of $1,000. It was further provided that a special tax not exceeding $200 is imposed on "every accident or guarantee company, and $100 on every marine insurance company doing business or taking risks in the city; when any such insurance company combines two or more branches of any insurance one tax only shall be levied on such company, that is to say, the tax, the rate of which is the highest on any of the said branches of insurance." The Royal Insurance Company claims to have been compelled to pay $400 for carrying on a fire insurance business in 1903, and also $200 for the life department. The following year the tax on fire insurance amounted to $1,000, and $200 on life insurance. They contend that the city has not the power to impose both taxes under the provisions of the by-law, and on this account a claim is made for the $400 paid during these two years, on the life insurance business of the company. It appears that a portion of the draft of the published by-laws has been left out; but it is asserted that when the bill left Montreal it was complete, and also when it passed through the Quebec House. As it now appears, however, it is claimed it may have the effect of rendering the city powerless to impose the taxes on insurance companies. On the other hand the city authorities assert that the error is only a clerical one, and can be readily repaired by the Legislature.

At a special meeting of shareholders of the Montreal Trust & Deposit Company, held on Thursday of last week, it was decided to increase its capital to $1,500,000, which is the amount allowed by its charter. The intention is to increase in capital during the present year to an amount of $500,000, which is to be fully paid up, the balance to be issued later as may subsequently be decided.

MOUNT ROYAL.

Montreal, 29th April, 1905.

## OUR ST. JOHN LETTER.

The lumbermen in all sections of the Province of New Brunswick, excepting the few who operate on small streams near the seaboard, are greatly worried over the situation. This spring has been a most remarkable one. Since March 1st there has not been a snow or rain storm of any consequence, and the snow that fell during the earlier part of the winter has melted away gradually without raising any freshet in the rivers. The logs will all be hung up unless unusually heavy rains come within the next two weeks. There are in safe waters, including the logs held over from last year, probably 40,000,000 feet. This the mills will soon use up and the outlook now is that hardly any of the more than 100,000,000 feet of logs on the upper St. John will get to the booms. The operators on the Miramichi and other