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**A Remedy for Smoke.** The Montreal Witness gives an account of what is claimed to be a very successful contrivance for doing away with the smoke nuisance connected with the burning of soft coal in factories. The anti-smoke apparatus is used in the furnace room of the Dominion Bridge Company's works at Lachine. The following description is given of it: In front of each of the large boiler furnaces is a hopper, into which the coal is shovelled. Underneath this is a steam cylinder, the piston of which pushes the coal into the furnace, underneath the fire. In this lies all the secret—the coal is put in underneath the fire the gases from it pass through the fire and are burnt, while the coal is baked into coke, no more smoky than anthracite. This coking process goes on in a long narrow trough from front to back of the furnace. The coal is pushed along this by the piston, while the intense heat of the fire above bakes out its gases. Just along the edge of the trough are holes through which air is forced by a fan, at a pressure of an ounce or two to the square inch. The gas burns with this air, in a mass of white-hot coke—an ideal condition for combustion. As the coal is pushed up by more coming behind, the coke piles up and falls over on the flat plates to each side, covering the whole bed of the furnace with a glowing mass. Mr. Dawson, the mechanical superintendent, is enthusiastic in praise of these stokers. Besides eliminating smoke he says, they enable him to get more power from less coal, with only a third as much ash. The absence of smoke makes the boiler flues so clean that they only have to be cleaned once a week, instead of every day, as formerly.

**The C. P. R. and its Atlantic Service.** At the annual meeting of the stockholders of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company held in Montreal on Oct. 1, President Shaughnessy in the course of an address alluded to the proposals made by the C. P. R. management to the Canadian Government in reference to the establishment of an Atlantic Fast Line. According to the report published of President Shaughnessy's statement on this matter, the C. P. R. proposal was as follows: The company offered, subject to certain traffic arrangements, to establish a weekly service of 20 knot steamships between Liverpool and a St. Lawrence port during the summer months, Halifax to be the Canadian port during the winter months, for a subsidy of £265,000 sterling per annum during the first 10 years, with a graduated reduction in the amount of subsidy during each of the two following periods of five years, the ships to be most modern in every respect and to be built specially for the route. In addition to this the company signified its willingness to furnish a fleet of modern freight steamers of 10,000 tons capacity each, sailing at a speed of about 12 or 13 knots per hour, serving Canadian ports. Up to the present, the president said, the directors had received no intimation of the policy likely to be adopted by the Government, but in any event the rapid increase of the C. P. R.'s export tonnage and the necessity of being able to quote through rates of freight and give through bills of lading would make it necessary for the company to control a line of freight steamers for its trans-Atlantic trade.

**The Australian Commonwealth.** The course of confederation is not running smoothly in the Australian Commonwealth. There is, it appears, much dissatisfaction, especially in Queensland, with ominous talk of breaking up the union, and Premier Philp of Queensland now openly advocates secession. Federal legislation in respect to the colored labor question has worked disastrously

for the sugar industry of Queensland, and hence the desire of the people of that State to break away from the union. Mr. Philp does not believe that 20 per cent. of the people of Queensland will vote for continuance in the Commonwealth. It is said that in other Australian States there has been considerable change of opinion on the question of union since the referendum was taken. But it appears that the Commonwealth is established on such conditions that it will not be easy to get out of it by any constitutional means, for the constitution makes no provision for secession, and the only way out of the union would appear to be by an act of repeal or by civil war. It will be most unfortunate if the Australian States, after having entered into political wedlock, are not able to live happily together, but probably they will find it better to make some mutual concessions for the sake of maintaining the union, concluding, as the Canadian Provinces have done, that though some minor disadvantages may be involved in confederation, it is eminently worth maintaining.

**Great Disasters in Sicily.** A tornado accompanied by floods and causing great disaster and loss of life passed over the Province of Catania, Sicily, on September 26. The effects of the storm in the southern parts of Sicily are reported to have been terrible. Two mountain torrents ran through the town of Medica, flooding all the houses in the low-lying parts and wrecking many of them completely. The inhabitants were aroused by the terrible roar of the storm and attempted to escape but the main street of the town had become a boiling river and escape was impossible. The volcano of Stromboli was in full eruption at the time. A despatch says: Huge boulders fell into the sea for a distance of four kilometers. The director of the Aetna Observatory believes that there was a submarine eruption between the island of Stromboli and Sicily. The German steamship Caperra foundered at the entrance of the harbor of Catania, Sicily. The latest advices from Sicily estimate that 500 corpses have been recovered. Three hundred and seventy of these were thrown up on the eastern coast of the island. The sea continues to throw up bodies which have been brought down by the torrents from the interior. Many persons are still unaccounted for. It is known that 300 perished at Medica.

**Two Fast Cunarders.** Much interest has been excited by the announcement that the Cunard Steamship Company has entered into an agreement with the British Government, in accordance with which the Company will add to its Atlantic service two large steamships having greater speed capacity than any existing Atlantic liners. The Government, it is stated, will pay the Company an annual subsidy of £150,000, and will lend the money necessary for the construction of the steamships, charging interest at the rate of 2½ per cent., the Company engaging to repay the loan by annual payments extending over twenty years. The agreement is to remain in force for twenty years after the completion of the second steamer, and a guarantee is to be given by the Company that it will not unduly raise the rates. The new boats it is understood will have a possible speed of 25 knots which will give them the pre-eminence in respect to speed over the fastest German ships. The Cunard steamers will of course run to United States ports. It is inferred in some quarters that this agreement with the Cunard Company means that the British Government will not subsidize a 20 knot Canadian service, and that the Canadian fast line scheme will be abandoned in favor of a com-

bined passenger and freight service. This however does not appear to be a necessary inference and may have no foundation in fact.

**The Coal Strike.** In view of the very large extent of the anthracite coal-mining operations and the great and necessary part which that kind of fuel plays for heating and manufacturing purposes, a strike of the anthracite coal miners of the United States, extending over six months and practically stopping the production of that kind of coal, must be a matter of most serious consequence in that country and also to a large degree in Canada. The unyielding determination of the miners, on the one part, not to abate their demands, and of the coal corporations, on the other, not to grant those demands and not to submit the matters in dispute to arbitration, has brought about a situation so serious, in view of the approaching cold weather, that President Roosevelt has thought it necessary to call the representatives of the conflicting interests together with a view to mediating between them and, if possible, settling their dispute. The meeting took place on Friday last, but was barren of results, or at least of the result hoped for, as neither party was willing to yield anything in respect to its demands. It appears that the President is not disposed to give up the attempt at settlement without further effort. A Cabinet meeting was held on Sunday at which it is believed some action was taken in regard to the matter, but just what line of action the President has now in view has not yet been made public. It would seem however that some means must be found for remedying a condition of things that has already caused very considerable loss and inconvenience to the public, and which if continued into the colder weather must result in untold suffering.

**The English Education Bill.** The London correspondent of the *New York Tribune* notes that the Congregational Council of Great Britain by an overwhelming majority has sanctioned passive resistance to the payment of rates under the Government Education Bill in the event of that ill-considered measure becoming law. And the Baptist Union is expected to adopt a similar course. The campaign which Dr. Clifford, Dr. Robertson Nicoll and other Nonconformist leaders organized against the Bill is no longer lightly regarded, as at first, as a futile menace. The threats of passive resistance if carried out, would force the local authorities to sell the furniture of the Nonconformists and would throw the whole country into a state of lawlessness and turmoil. Some members of the Administration are alarmed at the situation and advise compromise, and some of the Government's supporters advise the withdrawal of the Bill. This counsel, Mr. I. N. Ford thinks, Mr. Balfour is not likely to take. He is more likely under the threat of passive resistance by the Nonconformists to harden his heart and persevere in his determination to carry the Bill at all hazards. The opponents of the bill have taken their stand on the broad principle that there must be absolute public control of schools if the ratepayers are to support them out of local taxation. Mr. Balfour's bill throws voluntary or denominational schools back upon the rates, but leaves the control of them in the hands of the religious bodies which have been supporting them. This will allow the Church of England or Roman Catholic managers to select the teachers and control religious instruction. There is no apparent method of compromising this question. The Nonconformists take the view that a free school system supported by local taxation must be essentially secular, and that the catechism and tenets of no religious body can be taught at the public expense.