



Y I Y I Y B Y • S T A F F • W R I T E R S Y I Y I Y

A CONDUCTOR on the Grand Trunk Railway running a "special" train from Harriston to Guelph, went to sleep, the train ran beyond the place where it should have turned off to allow a regular train to pass, and there was a collision and loss of life. It was shown that the conductor had been working eighteen and nineteen hours a day for five days in the week; and, after the trial, the judge sentenced him to three years in the penitentiary.

This act of severity will have two effects. It will endear the name of Mr. Justice Riddell to many people whose business calls them much upon the trains, and it will cause the employees of the railways to be less avaricious. It is no doubt true in many cases, as it was in this, that railway men often work long hours because there is "big" money to be earned in that way. Like the millionaire business man, broker or banker, like the coal miner and the coal-mine operator, like the doctor and the lawyer, like all classes of the community (except journalists), the railway employee is over-working himself for the sake of a few extra dollars. The mad rush for wealth is not confined to any one class. The man who is most free from overwork is the member of a trades-union which has managed to arrange that its members shall get 50 cents an hour for 25 cents worth of labour.

Those who manage the railways may also be to blame for allowing such a state of affairs to exist, but this case clearly shows that if the heads of the road are lax in enforcing idleness, it is the pleasure of their employees that the laxness should continue. Perhaps the decision will work a reform all "along the line."

THE Premier of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at a Colonial Conference in Old London, is an interesting and picturesque figure, one likely to appeal to the Imperialist imagination. The fact that a man of Gallic

SIR WILFRID name and race is at the head of
I N F R A N C E Britain's premier colony explains much of her policy and prosperity.

But Sir Wilfrid Laurier in France is still more suggestive. The French-Canadian of his class must find himself somewhat aloof from modern republican Paris. The Tricolour is occasionally referred to as a flag with some meaning for the native of Quebec, but New France along the St. Lawrence was familiar only with the old standard of the France over which a Louis reigned. The "Echo de Paris" is responsible for the news that Sir Wilfrid after attending to some official business in Paris, intends to go to Lachenais, a small village in the Department of Charente, from which in the year 1660 the founder of his family emigrated to Canada. This announcement suggests to Canadians of Anglo-Saxon descent the sobering reflection that the "old families" of this country are the descendants of the French immigrants of the seventeenth century. Historically speaking, the Canadians of such descent have the prior right to the name, a right which the people of Ontario are too much in the habit of ignoring.

Sir Wilfrid has the finest characteristics of his race but he is also in entire sympathy with the modern and complex Young Canada. While in France he will probably endeavour to interest authorities in Paris in the third centenary celebration of the foundation of Quebec.

It is proposed that the French, British and American squadrons should unite on the occasion as a preliminary to the fetes, which are to be held in Canada and France.

ELECTRICITY seems to be an elusive substance—hard to control, almost invisible and varying much in the cost of production. Probably the highest price ever paid for electricity was on an eighty-four year contract given by the Dominion Government to Mr. M. P. Davis, Esq., for lighting the Cornwall Canal. That was over \$60 per horse power.

The managing director of the Kingston Locomotive Works, Mr. Birmingham, states that he can produce electricity from coal, for ten hours a day, for \$12.50 a horse-power. Probably the twenty-four hour service would cost him between \$25 and \$30. The despatch giving the figures is not quite clear on that point.

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario announced some time ago, that it could purchase energy at Niagara Falls for \$12 a horse-power, with a twenty-four hour service. Now it announces that it has closed a ten-year contract at \$10.40. If more than 25,000 horse-power is taken, the price then falls to \$10. It is understood that the transmission to the various towns in Western Ontario will average about \$5. To Toronto it will be about \$6, making the cost in that city about \$16.10. This is cheaper than the Kingston figures and about one-quarter what the Dominion Government pays for the power and light at the Cornwall Canal.

There are those who still doubt that power can be generated at Niagara and delivered in Toronto at \$16.10. These doubters are in the Toronto Electric Light Co. and the Toronto Street Railway Co., who some time ago made a contract for a term of years at \$25 unmetered or \$35 metered. They claim that the Hydro-Electric Commission cannot beat their figures.

Probably there are explanations for these variations. A "horse-power" is a word of several meanings, and when it is measured in different ways different prices result. Again, the Toronto corporations may have paid too high for their power, since their contract was made a couple of years ago. Since then, electric inventions of one kind or another have cheapened or facilitated transmission and transformation. The Dominion Government will certainly lose a half million dollars on its contract. Electricity is slowly but surely getting cheaper.

EVERY little while there is talk of the Intercolonial being sold to one or other of the other great railway companies. The Montreal "Gazette," the staunchest anti-government-ownership journal in the country, keeps the idea pretty well to the front. The question then arises: What will Mr. Pugsley do with the Intercolonial if he becomes Minister of Railways?

The answer has already been given. Whether this was necessary to his success in St. John or is a matter of conviction, no one except his intimate friends may say. Whatever the motive, the railway policy of the new minister, if new minister he is to be, has been outlined so far as this point is concerned. What the master stood for, the disciple will maintain. This was Mr. Emmer-