

PROMINENT TOPICS.

Although the reports from Pretoria of the proceedings of the Boer delegates are said to be mere guesses they are regarded in London as sufficiently reliable to affect the money market. The prolongation of the delegates' deliberations seem to indicate a division in the camp or some problem being under consideration which require long discussion. If the Boers were unanimous for continuance of the war, or nearly so, the conference would have ended some days ago, as every hour the leaders are absent from the commandoes the more likelihood there is of discontent from the growth of a desire to end the struggle. It is not unlikely that the war will come to an end by the Boer forces becoming broken up by desertions as incidents are so continuously occurring that must tend to convince them of the utter hopelessness of their efforts.

The burning of the Sanitarium at St. Agathe, a three-storey private hospital is another warning against congregating the sick in a wooden building, especially where fire protection is so deficient. St. Agathe and the highlands of the district are regarded as remarkably healthy owing to their elevation giving such dryness and tonic properties to the atmosphere. Institutions of the hospital class, private or public, ought to be under special inspection to ensure, as far as possible, their immunity from fire, for such a disaster is liable to have fatal consequences to the sick inmates.

The Larocque case which caused the recent seizure at the City Hall was settled on the 20th inst., by payment of the amount claimed \$6,000 and costs \$820. The costs of the seizure were not included in above payment as they were otherwise arranged for.

The City Council has granted a franchise for ten years to the Terminal Railway Company empowering it to lay tracks on certain streets to be in direct connection with those of the Bout de l'Isle line of electric cars. Though the proposed routes will be a certain convenience to some citizens, it is to be regretted that a double set of electric cars should be established in this city, where the streets are so narrow and where already there is ample accommodation for all the passenger traffic that exists, or, what is likely to be created for some years. Two lines of the Montreal St. Railway now run right up to the tracks of the Terminal line, so that line is already, practically, in connection with every part of this city, so that a 4 cent ticket will carry a passenger from the extreme parts of the city and land him at the Terminal line. Some arrangements should be made to avoid more of our narrow streets

being obstructed by tram cars. What is needed is a well ordered scheme for bringing all parts of the Island of Montreal, to which there is passenger traffic, under central management, which would ensure economical working and the greater convenience of the public.

The "shipping merger" by which clumsy title the arrangement is styled by which a number of steamship lines become amalgamated and controlled mainly by American capitalists, is still a live question, but it is less sensational than a week or two ago. The White Star Line has entered the combination, but its agreement with the British government will be maintained. Reports have been published which give ground for fears that the controllers of the shipping combine have no friendly feeling towards Canada, or for any vessels that run to this port from Great Britain, or, any transportation enterprise which is independent of the combine. There is such a thing as vaulting ambition overleaping itself and falling on the other side. The design to boycott this Dominion and its shipping and its railways, and to paralyze its immigration service, which is attributed to the shipping combine, is just one of those ambitions that cannot be gratified, save very temporarily, as such a conspiracy against a whole country's independence must give rise to defensive measures by which the injury intended will be averted. If necessary for self-defence Canada will have her national line of steamers, and well organized transport connections made with the North West wheat fields, by which the products of this country can be landed in Great Britain as cheaply, if not more so, than by any other route.

Cuba Free! Such was the watchword of the Cubans prior to the capture of the Island by the United States in 1898-1899. To-day Cuba is free of any foreign master. The capacity of the Cubans for self-Government has yet to be tested. They take up their freedom under exceptionally favourable conditions. They have had several years in which to observe closely the administrative methods of United States officials. They have almost a clear slate, financially, also the advantages of railways built by foreign capital. If new rulers fail in giving peace, prosperity and contentment to the people there will be a recrudescence of those "abhorrent conditions" which the United States Government considered to justify the wrenching of Cuba from Spain, and Cuba will again be put under a foreign yoke, probably annexed to the States. It was a very remarkable coincidence for the crowning of the new King of Spain to have taken place at the same time as the installation of a President of the Republic of Cuba. Both rulers hold no enviable position.