

ment, while deposits of iron ore are found abundantly close by. There will naturally be a good deal of opposition to the scheme from rival ports, but if the idea can really be proved practical, the advantage to the Dominion at large will immeasurably outweigh any harm done to sister-cities. The natural situation and scientific advantages are great, and it remains to be seen whether they can be utilized.

### PARIS, A SEAPORT.

The committee of inquiry for the deepening of the Seine, to enable seagoing vessels to reach Paris, have just sent in, says the Paris correspondent of the *Standard*, a favourable report to the Government. The project on which the inquiry was based consists in the deepening of the channel of the Seine from Rouen to Paris to 6 mètres 20 centimètres, and in the shortening of the distance by water between those two towns by the cutting of two canals joining the extremities of the loops made by the Seine between Oissel and Pont de l'Arche, and between Sartronville and Bezons. The distance by the Seine and these proposed canals from Rouen to Paris would thus be reduced to 182 kilomètres. The Paris seaport would be made between St. Denis and Clichy, and five minor ports would be created at Les Andelys, Vernon, Mantes, Poissy, Achères and Argenteuil.

The cost of the works is put down at 150,000,000 francs, and the company would undertake to execute them, without any subvention or guarantee of interest from the State or from the Paris municipality, in consideration of a concession for ninety-nine years. I would be authorised to charge during that period a maximum toll of 3 francs per ton on the tonnage of sea-going vessels drawing more than 3 mètres of water, and ascending the Seine to Paris. The toll would be proportionate for vessels stopping at the intermediate stations. The Paris Port de Mer Company would also be permitted to charge pilot dues amounting to 25 centimes per ton, and demands to be empowered to charge harbour dues. Boats and barges would be exempt from any sort of toll or tax so long as they continue, as at present, to draw no more than 3 mètres of water and to follow the course of the Seine without using the canals cutting off the loops of the river.

The public inquiry, opened on September 15 and closed on November 15 last, resulted in the sending in of 345,027 notices from private individuals, of which 345,014 were favourable to the principle of Paris being made accessible to sea-going vessels, while only thirteen were opposed to it. Three hundred and forty-four thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine were favourable to the present project, and 198 opposed to it. All the Councils Generals, Municipal Councils, Chambers of Commerce, etc., of the Department of the Seine and other departments interested in the scheme were favourable with the exception of the Western Railway, the Seine Navigation Company, and the Chambers of Commerce of Rouen, Dieppe and Bordeaux. To these opponents must be added the chief engineers for the navigation of the Seine and the General Council of Ponts et Chaussées. But M. Poirrier, senator for Paris, and formerly pre-

sident of the Paris Chamber of Commerce, who is charged with the report on the inquiry, remarks in that document that the number of objections to the projected enterprise is very small. No one, he says, denies the advantages to be derived from the creation of ports far inland accessible to sea-going vessels. M. Poirrier does not contest the truth of the assertion that Rouen, Havre and Dieppe would suffer from the opening of the proposed Port of Paris, but he thinks that within a short time the development of commerce it would insure would pay those places for the temporary loss they would sustain.

After dealing with the technical objections raised against the project, Mr. Poirrier comes to the financial question. It has been objected that the cost of the works would greatly exceed the one hundred and thirty-five million francs estimated by the promoters, and also the one hundred and fifty million francs to which the promoters' estimate was increased by the Minister of Public Works. Consequently, the company would probably be unable to complete its task; the State would be made responsible were the enterprise declared to be a work of public utility, and, therefore, it would be difficult for the State not to intervene in the case of the discomfiture of the Paris Port de Mer Company. In this report M. Poirrier insists that the Committee of Inquiry does not consider that the declaration of public utility entails any responsibility for the State, and does not see why the State should insist on capitalists being more prudent in their investments than they themselves care to be.

While thus accepting and supporting the scheme for making Paris a seaport, the Committee of Inquiry formulated certain conditions. These were that the works must be executed without interfering with the traffic on the Western Railway; the boats and barges plying on the river must not be subject to any new charges; the loops of the Seine not utilised by the Paris Port de Mer Company must be maintained at the present depth of 3 mètres 20 centimètres; the company must take upon itself the cost of the alteration necessitated in the sewerage works the city of Paris is now carrying out; and, finally, the State should reserve itself the right to purchase the concession of the Paris Port de Mer Company before the expiration of the ninety-nine years. — *Builders Reporter & Engineering Times*.

### IMPROVED METHODS OF BUILDING.

The Equitable Assurance Co., of New York, is erecting in Denver a building which is to cost \$1,500,000, to be finished by April 1, 1892. It is designed for modern offices, is to be thoroughly fire-proof, and will, when finished, be the finest and most costly building west of Chicago. This great work is being carried forward by the Denver Equitable Building Company, a corporation organized for this special purpose.

In carrying out such a work as this, the first question which presents itself is one of economy of labor. In addition to this, the shortness of the time which is allowed for the completion of the building has a modifying influence on the method of construction. The principal work in the erection of one of these monster buildings is the handling of the thousands