

THE CANAL QUESTION.

We gather from the supplement to the annual report of the Department of Railways and Canals, that the quantity of grain that passed down the Welland Canal and was transhipped at Canadian ports to Montreal during the season of 1891 was 270,861 tons, upon which a refund was made of 18 cents per ton to the amount of \$49,834. Of the 220,527 tons of grain passed down the Welland Canal to United States ports during the same period 17,817 tons were transhipped at Ogdensburg and passed down the St. Lawrence canals to Montreal. Upon these transhipments no refund was made. Moreover, the same report shows that while the receipts at Montreal last year by St. Lawrence canals show an increase of 51.09 per cent., the receipts by water at New York show a decrease of 6.71 per cent., and by rail of 22.61 per cent. According to dispatches from Ottawa, Washington and elsewhere, the misunderstandings over the refunds referred to above are in process of adjustment, the American government having made strong representations as to the disabilities under which they are suffering on this account. This entire subject, as we learn, was the main subject considered at a cabinet council held in Montreal at the end of the week, the decision arrived at being that Canada, sooner than give the Americans grounds of offense and occasion for what they term retaliatory measures, will modify the existing system at the close of the present season. This talk of retaliation and, indeed, the act of retaliation itself is a tremendous weapon that the Americans have used and are using, as it terribly disadvantages us. In nine cases out of ten, it is a mere pretence, with the help of which they are enabled to do us injury, and demonstrates that, at least on their part, the good neighborhood between us is more a pretence than anything else.

BUILDING REGULATIONS.

The new building by-laws of the city of Boston, are well worthy the attention of the Municipal authorities here. Under them "no buildings, excepting wharf sheds and grain elevators, shall hereafter be put up having a height of more than 70 feet or an area greater than 10,000 square feet, unless strictly of incombustible materials. No building, to be used above the first floor for mercantile, manufacturing or storage purposes, can be put up having a height of more than 45 feet unless constructed wholly of incombustible material or with tight floors of grooved planks at least two inches thick. No building of any kind or material will hereafter be allowed exceeding a height of 125 feet, and brick, stone, or iron buildings must have party or bearing walls of brick carried at least one foot above the roof. These must be plastered directly upon either solid masonry or metal lathing. All columns or beams bearing weight must be protected by brick, terra cotta or other incombustible material. Doorways in partition walls cannot exceed two upon each floor, and these must be protected by double, tin-covered doors hung to iron frames. Buildings, except offices and

dwellings within 30 feet of an exposing opening, must have fire proof shutters, and all elevators must be of solid brick or other incombustible material, and the openings furnished with metal-covered doors."

We are quite ready to believe that the adoption of some such an ordinance as the above, even more specifically adapted, perhaps, to our conditions, would not commend itself to some of our aldermen, inasmuch as it would entail more outlay on their part and on that of some of the mossbacks whom they specially represent, in the buildings which they run up to rent; but unless they are equal to the situation they will find that the underwriters will increase their rates of premium, as they did some years ago in the city of Quebec, where the risks were enhanced by the combustible character of the buildings offered for insurance and the inadequacy of the water supply and the appliances with which to contend against conflagration. As far as they go both the men and the material belonging to the Victoria fire brigade are of an excellent class, but there are not enough of them, while, as was specially evidenced at the fire at Spring Ridge, the water mains did not reach far enough, and the buildings consumed were shells that burned almost as quickly as matches. It is true that the Boston by-law reaches far and away beyond the class of buildings that we have even in the centre of this city; but if there they do not consider existing comparatively high-class structures up to the standard of requirements, in what condition may we not regard our city as being?

QUARANTINE STATIONS.

"To-morrow!" was the watchword with which the late Sir John Macdonald was credited; "how not to do a thing" appears to be a tolerably correct definition of the policy of the Abbott administration. It is announced that the new pier at the quarantine station below Quebec is about to be undertaken right away; the same was said about necessary additions and improvements to the establishment at Albert Head; but where is anything really being done? We should be glad to see less talk and more work. The former is cheap, and while Dominion necessities demand that many things be done, political exigencies stand in the way, and this has doubtless caused the Government to adopt the former Premier's plan of non-action; but for "the novelty of the thing" the fresh name has been applied to it. The seaports of our neighbors are carefully and intelligently guarded by the best appliances known to modern sanitary science, while we are at the mercy both of cholera and smallpox.

The salmon pack on the Skeena River has, according to latest advices, been completed, and before long this branch of operations in other parts of the province will have been brought to an end for this season at least. Prices seem likely to improve, and it is hoped that before another year comes round matters will have so adjusted themselves that both production and sale will be on a more satisfactory basis.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"A READER," a gentleman of some business prominence, remarks, in connection with the city sewerage system, that the apathy of the Aldermen suggests to him the scripture reference to the man who in his undertakings had neglected to count the cost, and to the practical experiences of the person who, compelled to abandon a building which he had started, caused it to be placarded "—s Folly."

A PROJECT which, on the first brush, was favorably regarded, viz., that of a fire insurance exhibit at the World's Fair, including fire-proof building construction and fire-preventing appliances, has fallen through, many of the leading companies whose hearty co-operation would have ensured its success having held back to see what the others would do. Foreign companies, it is worthy of note, were not the only ones to procrastinate, but first-class American institutions assumed the same position.

A RUMOR was recently current in Montreal, which it is only fair to say was denied, that an English syndicate had offered two million pounds for the Canadian Pacific Telegraph lines. If there was no truth in the story, where did it come from? Experience has shown that, in most cases, rumors have some foundation, or at least had some object in being circulated, and in a case like this the story is none the worse for being repeated. It shows the way the wind is blowing, and is also an indication of the importance to which what is veritably a branch of the great Canadian Pacific Railway system has grown.

ONCE again has the charge of official neglect to be made against the Dominion authorities. We have more than once filed a bill of particulars reciting grievances of which British Columbia had to complain, and again not we alone, but the press of the province, of Canada, and of Great Britain also, have occasion to growl about the official neglect that has imperilled the Imperial flagship on the Pacific station and placed in jeopardy the hundreds of lives with which she was manned. The time has, indeed, arrived for a thorough survey of the waters of British Columbia, in order that charts may be obtained that are really reliable.

FOREIGN COAL SHIPMENTS.

The following are the shipments for the week ending August 13:—

NEW VANCOUVER COAL CO. SHIPPING.		
Date.	Vessel and Destination.	Tons.
8.	Tyco, str., Port Townsend.....	81
13.	Oriental, ship, San Francisco.....	2,840
Total.....		2,921

The old-established business of Messrs. Mathers & Milligan, New Westminster, has changed hands, the Brackman & Ker Milling Co., of Victoria, having bought out the goodwill, business, stock, etc. The business will be run as before on the same premises on Front street. The managers at New Westminster will be Messrs. W. H. Mathers and W. H. Ker.