

Prominent Topics.

The World's Message-Sender.

A recent Punch cartoon depicts President Roosevelt upon the veldt—surrounded by animals, fierce, various and expectant. But the mighty Nimrod withholds his "dum-dums" yet a little while from their devoted heads. For why? The exhaustless fountain pen of the President Emeritus is speeding an extra extra-mural Message Extraordinary to Congress. But Punch is mistaken if he thinks that Rooseveltian Speeches from the Throne are necessarily limited to congressional destination. As Message-Sender-at-Large to the Universe, the ex-President will have a greater role. This week there has come to His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada by special bearer, a letter explaining to him why it will be to the Dominion's advantage to join in the work of the National Conservation Commission of the United States in seeking the most effective means for conserving the natural resources of the North American Continent. Mexico, too, is being invited to designate representatives to join in the proposed conference.

The President's idea is a good one—as, be it said, very many of his ideas are. But Canadians, generally, will incline to agree with a daily contemporary that it might be well for the Dominion Government, in the accepting of this invitation, not to do anything calculated to convey the impression that there is any acceptance of "Monroe Doctrinal" ideas as to the United States having a superior voice in matters that affect the continent.

Railroad Earnings.

Since western crop-moving began, Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern gross earnings have shown gratifying increases over last season's record. And the large quantities of grain awaiting winter shipment ensure activity during coming months. That the Grand Trunk has not been able to change decreases to increases in its weekly showings, is not to be put down solely to a falling-off in business within the eastern part of the Dominion, which it more especially serves. Much of the traffic of the system originates in the United States, and the cattle quarantine alone is estimated as causing a \$20,000 loss weekly.

Gross earnings of the Canadian Pacific for the five months, since July 1st, amount to \$33,755,783 as compared with \$34,466,919 in 1907—a shrinkage of only \$711,136. During the same period, net profits were \$11,844,425, as against \$12,353,833 a year earlier—a decrease of but \$509,407.

High Pressure for Montreal.

The extension of Montreal's proposed high pressure system to a larger area than that provided for in a recent by-law was tentatively discussed this week by members of the Legislative Committee of the City Council. One of the Aldermen suggested that in the event of such a plan being carried out the tax involved should be on buildings alone, not on land—the former only requiring fire protection. The argument was also advanced that the city ought to contribute a share of the expense, instead of placing it entirely upon property-holders, as at present provided in connection with the West ward high pressure system. The enlarged area proposed is bounded by Berri street, Craig to Cathedral, across Chaboillez square to Commissioners, and down to Berri. The large feed main on Craig street would be tapped with

smaller mains running uphill for a block or two, so as to protect buildings there. The same thing would be carried out on Commissioners street, where the smaller pipes would extend to the steamship sheds, and protect them.

Lake Shipment of Grain Doubled During 1908.

According to figures issued at Ottawa by the Trade and Commerce Department, 43,935,596 bushels of the 1908 grain crops were shipped from Port Arthur and Fort William up to the close of navigation on December 12, as compared with 23,482,497 in the corresponding period of 1907. Of the total, wheat shipment amounted to 36,017,483 as against 20,545,859. Of the season's wheat output from Fort William and Port Arthur, 23,593,374 bushels were carried in Canadian vessels and 12,418,109 in foreign vessels to United States ports. Canadian vessels also carried 1,186,496 bushels of wheat to Buffalo, so that in all 13,604,605 bushels of Canadian wheat, or a total of 16,286,157 bushels of grain, found their way to export points via United States routes.

One of Fate's Ironies.

By one of Fate's tragic ironies the Tuesday morning newspapers, which announced the final audit of the San Francisco relief distribution of nearly \$10,000,000, contained despatches of the appalling earthquake that devastated city after city, with towns and villages almost innumerable, throughout Southern Italy and Sicily. Was there ever a more sad reminding that the suffering and the poor "ye have always with you"? One's heart warms to the King of Italy, not so much for his hurrying to the scene of disaster—he could do no less—as for his contemptuous retort to the courtier who toadyingly observed:

"The presence of Your Majesty will suffice to console the stricken population."

The Plait of Gompers.

Since President Gompers, of the American Federation of Labour, has been treated to a heavy sentence for contempt of court, he has dropped from the columns of The Federationist the "We don't patronize" list—which was the immediate cause of the trouble. He urges that an effort be made to get Congress to amend the Sherman law in such a way as to allow labour unions to escape the provisions of the anti-trust law. Sauce for capitalistic geese, well and good! But none for—Gompers.

Earthquakes and Insurance.

To fire insurance companies the catastrophe of Monday last, in Italy and Sicily, gives grim emphasis to the necessity for an irrefragable "earthquake clause" in fire policies. Only a week ago it was announced that British offices had agreed to settle all Jamaica claims of two years ago, on a basis of 85 p.c. without adjustment and including costs.

The Canadian High Commissioner.

It is gratifying to know on the high authority of the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, that there is no foundation for the rumours so freely circulated, that Lord Strathcona contemplates resigning the High Commissionership. There is no man living so qualified by ability, experience, personal influence and fortune, to serve the Dominion in the capacity of High Commissioner to London as Lord Strathcona.