

THE LAKE LEVELS AND THE CHICAGO CANAL.

The report from Chicago that Governor Altgeld, of Illinois, has vetoed the bill for the canal under construction to connect Lake Michigan with the Mississippi, is satisfactory news, alike to Canadians and Americans interested in the navigation of the great lakes. Engineers differ as to the effect of this canal on the lake levels, but many reputable professional men think it would lower the lakes by six to nine inches. To show our government the seriousness of the case, we have only to contemplate the results of such a change in a year like this. On the first of this month the water in the 27½ ft. channel of the St. Lawrence at Montreal was 28 ft. 5 in. against 31 ft. 2 in. in 1894, making a fall of 2 ft. 9 in. Add an additional six inches, or perhaps a foot, to this fall (for we cannot be sure that the lowering might not be greater in the rivers and canals than in the lakes), and we would have a chain of waterways that would be practically unnavigable for the vessels that now ply in our waters. Even as it is, vessels are continually bumping and grounding on the canals, and the R. & O. boats are put to a great deal of inconvenience in transferring passengers and luggage to smaller boats coming down the rapids. Canadians cannot risk the possible injury such a canal would cause to our most vital interests; and any lowering of the lake levels would be equally injurious to cities on the American side of these great waterways.

As to the veto of Gov. Altgeld, on the ground that this was a Federal and not a State question, we presume this refers to a bill providing for the balance of funds, as three years work amounting to \$10,000,000 has already been done on the canal, and it is estimated that \$15,000,000 more will be required to finish the work, which was intended as a canal for both drainage and navigation purposes. The Canadian Government must not go to sleep over this matter, which could be taken up in detail by the three commissioners they propose to appoint to sit with the American commission on the deep waterways scheme. It is worth stating that the directors of the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co. have memorialized our Government on the subject, and among American cities, Cleveland, through its Chamber of Commerce, has petitioned the Secretary of War to ascertain the effect of this canal.

ONTARIO GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION.

The history of the inauguration of a great public work generally deals with the opposition it encountered on various sides, and recounts the great endurance of its promoters and their well-earned success; when we look into one of the greatest achievements of this century, the establishment of the steam railway, we admire the energy and perseverance of those who promoted and brought to such successful termination this vast public improvement. Whilst the history of the end of the second decade of this century records the battles of the gauges and other triumphs of Stephenson, a perusal of the history of public works in the end of the last decade will be a source of surprise to the future writer, when he studies the story of how the public roads of this Province were improved. It will be a revelation to him that a large number of professional men of high standing, and many representative business men, aided in a most liberal manner by the Government of the Province, labored continuously for over two years in spreading the gospel of good roads without being

able to induce the rural municipalities to undertake the greatly needed improvements. There is good reason to believe the day is not far distant when these municipalities having adopted the advice so liberally and freely given to them, and acknowledged the benefits derived from good roads, will express surprise that they delayed so long to promote their own advancement.

The improvement of roads is the only great public work which has ever been offered to the public, in which there is no need of shareholders, a stock list, or Government grants. Every well cultivated township has an ample fund at its disposal in the value of the yearly statute labor, to not only spend a sufficient sum in making first-class roads, but to maintain them also in perfect order. We have read with deep interest the recently published second annual report of the Ontario Good Roads Association; the work is full of most valuable information on technical points by experienced and qualified writers. A. W. Campbell's paper, "Good Roads," will be a lasting memorial to his diligence and ability as a writer on professional topics, whilst the practical information and hints drawn from his experience as a road engineer, place before the novice a sufficient fund of facts on which he can commence work without much fear of failure.

The association is to be congratulated on its work. Although named the second annual report, the association has actually only had one year's existence and experience. It may not be able to point to any direct improvement in road making during its existence; it can with justifiable satisfaction point to its work in lecturing and the information its members have so generously placed at the disposal of their fellow citizens. Four civil engineers contribute papers: A. W. Campbell, on "Good Roads"; W. M. Davis, on "Road Construction and Maintenance"; Alan Macdougall, on "Historical Roads," and P. K. Hyndman gives a few practical suggestions for the improvement and maintenance of the roads of Ontario; the farmer's side is presented by A. F. Wood. J. C. Judd writes on the statute labor law, and Judge Woods on drainage laws applied to good roads. Appended to the report is a special bulletin, copies of which are being spread broadcast by the Government.

ELECTRICAL CONVENTION.

It has been decided to hold the next annual convention of the Canadian Electrical Association at Ottawa, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the 24th, 25th and 26th of September. Those connected with the association in Ottawa are working to make this convention the best yet held, and the delegates will be well cared for during their stay in Ottawa. The Governor-General has manifested his interest in the association by placing his electric launch at the service of the members, while W. Y. Soper, of Ahearn & Soper, will treat the association to a garden party at his residence, and a local committee is arranging other entertainments for the guests.

The executive of the Canadian Association of Stationary Engineers, who also hold their convention in Ottawa during the same month, are considering the question of holding their sessions at the same dates. There is so much of common interest to the two organizations that if the sessions can be so arranged as to harmonize and give both the benefit of papers and discussions of general interest, a combined assembly would be of great advantage.