

miles. This enterprise, it is claimed, is receiving substantial aid and encouragement from the Government, and there are not wanting indications tending to support the belief that it may soon be undertaken.

Another important enterprise is that now attracting the attention of French capitalists, looking to the establishment of a water-way from the Gulf of Lyons to the Bay of Biscay, which, it is believed, will secure a considerable portion of the twenty million tons of shipping that annually pass through Gibraltar to the Adriatic and Black Sea, as well as part of the trade of Northern Europe with India and China that now follows the old route by way of the Cape of Good Hope. This canal is to start from Bordeaux, utilising the various fresh-water canals on the route, and terminating at Cette, on the Gulf of Lyons. Including the old and new canals, the proposed route will be two hundred and twenty five miles in length, and in width and depth it will conform to the measurement of the Suez Canal. The peculiar topography of the country will necessitate the construction of over one hundred locks between Bordeaux and Cette, and the estimated cost of the work is about \$125,000,000. This route lying wholly within French territory, will be longer than the Suez, or any other of the canals contemplated. The fact that it will open a new outlet to the Mediterranean gives the project an importance other than purely commercial. France has long envied England the possession of the impregnable stronghold of Gibraltar and the consequent command of the trade of the Mediterranean and its tributaries, and should the proposed route be opened through French territory, it is claimed that England would find the possession of this point of but little advantage in peace or war. It is not unlikely that this enterprise, which is favored by the Government, will soon be undertaken, as liberal subscriptions have already been made to the capital stock of the company now engaged in surveying the route.

Another of the important ship-canal projects now favorably considered in Europe proposes to connect the Baltic Sea with the German Ocean. This project was first broached in 1860, but the breaking out of hostilities over the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty postponed its consideration for several years. It is now revived, and from our foreign exchanges we learn that the Boards of Trade of the maritime cities of the Baltic and the North Sea are urging the scheme on the favorable notice of the Prussian Government. It is claimed that forty thousand vessels pass yearly from the Baltic to the North Sea, of which number one hundred and seventeen were lost in one year, owing to the natural obstructions existing to the free passing of the Straits connecting the two seas. It is also stated that marine disasters are of frequent occurrence at all seasons of the year, and the navigation of the Belt and the Sound, necessitating a passage round the Skaw or northernmost spit of Jutland, is considered so hazardous by the British underwriters that much higher insurance premiums are charged on vessels bound for the Baltic than on those clearing for Hamburg. These considerations are thought sufficient to warrant a full discussion of the subject by the proper authorities, and a survey of the most practicable route from sea to sea. From the port of Kiel, on the east, to Toningen, at the head of the inlet of the Eider, on the west, is not more than seventy miles, and the estimated first cost of construction through the level stretch of country between these points is not over \$23,000,000. If such a channel is opened, and its navigation made easy to the commerce of the world, it will no doubt attract the greater part of the trade that now finds an outlet through the Skager Rack and Cattegat, and it is thought that the flow of commerce in that direction would soon be sufficient to yield a large return on the capital invested in its construction.

Our readers are familiar with the great project of an inter-oceanic ship canal across some part of the narrow isthmus connecting the two American continents, thus flanking Cape Horn as the Suez canal has flanked Cape of Good Hope and the proposed French canal will the Straits of Gibraltar. That the Government surveying expedition now on the ground will discover a practi-

cable route across the Isthmus of Darien may be considered extremely doubtful, but there are many indications of a determination on the part of our capitalists to engage in the construction of such a work as soon as a suitable route has been agreed upon. If the Government is really desirous of helping the project, it would do well to order a survey of Nicaragua and Tehuantepec, simultaneously with the Darien survey. This must be done eventually, as our capitalists will not advance the large sums necessary for the construction of the work until such surveys have been made and the best possible route between the two oceans determined upon.

Besides those we have mentioned, there are several ship-canal projects of less importance, each of which forms a part of the grand scheme of international improvement looking to the establishment of a system of direct water-ways for the world's commerce. What engineering skill has accomplished in the opening of direct routes across continents, overcoming every natural obstacle, is now demanded of it in the opening of new and safe channels for the commerce of the seas. That trade will, ultimately if not immediately, follow the new routes thus opened, cannot be questioned, although the process of diverting commerce from its established channels is usually a slow one. As new vessels are built from time to time to take the place of those now engaged in the carrying trade, they will be constructed with a view to following canals which will, in time, attract the great volume of trade flowing in these directions. An instance of this is seen in the increasing tonnage of the Suez Canal. Some days ago the telegraph reported the arrival of the cotton steamer "Danube" at Liverpool, from Boubay, by way of Suez, and we now hear of the arrival of the steamer "Stirling" from and to the same ports, in forty-three days. The time consumed in passing the canal was but fourteen hours, and the entire lapse of the voyage but little more than one-third the time necessary for doubling the Cape of Good Hope. This voyage, together with the previous passage of the "Brazilian," carrying over 11,000 bales of cotton, would appear to establish the practical utility of the Suez Canal to the British trade in all weathers, and remove all doubts as to the success of the great enterprise of which we have had such conflicting reports during the past few months; and when we consider the volume of trade annually flowing back and forth between the maritime cities of Great Britain, France, Belgium and Holland, on the one hand, and the ports of India, China, Japan and the Eastern Archipelago on the other, that must eventually, even if slowly, turn into this new channel from the less direct routes it now follows, we understand the changes this one route is likely to effect, and to a greater or less degree the influence upon the commerce of the world of the other canals now contemplated. In this age of industrial enterprise and of competition among nations, for commercial supremacy, trade must move rapidly, and instead of following the old water-ways round continents it seeks the most direct channel that nature and art can together provide for it.—
Hunt's Merchants' Magazine.

Primary Education in Ireland.

The following are the most important of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the General Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the subject of Primary Education in Ireland:—

That the progress of the children in the National Schools of Ireland is very much less than it ought to be. That in Church Education schools, non-National Convent schools, and Christian Brothers' schools, the result is not very different.

That to secure a better return for the outlay and labour of the National system, each teacher, besides a fixed class salary, should receive an addition according to the number of children whom the inspector, after individual examination, can pass as having made satisfactory progress during the year.