

the ship's chart, while Mr. Lemieux, postmaster-general, might set up a marine post-office.

In the sporting department, Mr. Brodeur, minister of marine and fisheries, could see that big enough lines and hooks were provided for parliamentary whale fishing. Mr. Aylesworth, minister of justice, would probably preside at the mock trial on concert night, and Mr. Paterson, with a customary wink, would allow the members, with English souvenirs, to leave the vessel without question. Mr. Templeman's time would possibly be spent in dragging the ocean bed for minerals. Mr. Fitzgerald, of the insurance department, would undoubtedly obtain pointers on speed from the watery blue respecting his annual volume of the same color.

Mr. Pugsley, minister of public works, and Mr. Graham could collaborate with a view to introducing a Cross-Atlantic Bridge, Canal and Subway scheme. The Indian at sea might prove Mr. Frank Oliver's study, and the department of the interior would naturally be as much in evidence afloat as on shore. Mr. Fisher, minister of agriculture, would have to content himself with the growth of seaweed, and Sir Richard Cartwright, of the trade and commerce department, might calculate the per capita food consumption on board. Mr. Mackenzie King, the department of labor expert on trusts, would be able to study the steamship combine at close range. The services of Dr. James Bonar, deputy master of the Royal Mint at Ottawa, and Mr. John Fraser, auditor-general, would be required when the vessel docked again at Montreal. Meanwhile, Sir Wilfrid Laurier could smile. Which is probably what he is doing respecting the brilliant scheme for the Niobe's dash to the coronation. Hansard reporters would have to stay at home.

BLANK CHEQUES.

Magistrate Jay, of Victoria, the other day commented upon the practice of the banks in leaving blank cheques around in their lobbies, accessible to any criminally minded person. He thought it was a temptation to the forger and the utterer. The police chief stated he would report the remarks to the managers of city banks. The occasion was the trial of a man on four charges of passing bad cheques. These were not torn from a regular cheque book, but apparently obtained by the prisoner in the offices of the various banks on which they were drawn. Bank executives might well consider this matter, as a large number of forgeries may be traced to that source. European visitors to America are astonished to see the freedom with which bank cheques are accessible to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

BANK DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITY.

Bank directors who do not direct formed a topic of discussion even as far back as 1868. In The Monetary Times of September 10th of that year the following note appeared: "How much blame is to be borne by the manager or cashier of a bank, and how much is fairly attachable to its directors when the affairs of the institution become involved? The responsibility is undoubtedly divided; the cashier has his share and the directors have theirs. Sometimes the cashier shelters himself under the supposed larger responsibility of the directors, and not infrequently the latter clear their skirts at the expense of their chief executive officer. As long as prosperity prevailed, mutual congratulations, felicitations in phrase, were exchanged at intervals; but when the little cloud of trouble appeared on the horizon, the vote of thanks was hyperbolic, and on the bursting of the storm-cloud recrimination and hostility extinguished every spark of thankfulness. Under such circumstances we naturally enquire, Where should justice place the responsibility?"

EXPRESS RATES.

In giving judgment respecting express companies' rates, Judge Mabey, chairman of the Dominion Railway Commission, referred to the over-capitalization of these companies. He thought that the whole business of express, as it is carried on in Canada, could proceed as it does without the existence of any express companies at all by simply substituting railway employees for express employees, and making express traffic part of their work. He has ordered a re-arrangement of the standard mileage scales within three months.

It is understood that the express companies have accepted the ruling and will not appeal against the judgment. Exactly what this means will become more clear when the new rate schedule is filed.

The express companies in this country are in a different position from those in the United States and Great Britain. Here they are owned by the railways, while in the other countries they are entirely separate companies, using the railroad facilities in the conduct of their business. Perhaps Judge Mabey's reference to this matter was a hint that the Canadian express companies should do likewise. The railroad corporations, however, will probably conclude that it is more profitable to carry on the express business through the medium of controlled companies at reduced rates rather than to absorb the express business as part of the railway system.

CHINA AND ONTARIO.

A Mr. Gillies, who hails from Tacoma, proposes to construct a canal from Hamilton to Goderich. He has the backing of millions of capital, it is said, and boasts of the fact that he could sell bonds in connection with the scheme even in China. This fact is of little assistance in determining the possible value of such a canal. Can Mr. Gillies be sure of selling the bonds in Ontario, for instance? Power will be sought at the present session of the Dominion House to construct a canal from Lake Huron to Montreal, wide and deep enough to allow ocean vessels to meet and pass. Formerly railroad charters were the mainstay of parliamentary application. Probably for every twenty charters granted, one road was actually built. Ambitious canal projects may shortly depose the railroad scheme.

PEOPLE'S RAILWAY ENTERPRISE.

The People's Railway Company, which has an Ontario franchise, proposes to apply for a Dominion charter. Dominion railway charters have been granted far too easily in the past, and applications for new charters this session should be closely scrutinized. The People's Railway is being financed largely by Ontario municipalities, which are purchasing blocks of preferred stock. The company has also power to issue bonds, but the destination of these securities is at present unknown.

While applying for a Dominion charter the People's Railway intends to seek permission to increase its capital to \$5,000,000, to develop water powers for its own undertaking, and to operate steamship lines and elevators. Parliament should inform itself as to whether the present promoters really intend to operate their road or to hand it over to the stock-buying municipalities. We fear to imagine the consequences of a dozen or more Ontario municipalities running between them an electric railroad, water powers, steamship lines and elevators. The promoters of the People's Railway Company should be able to support their application with pretty good evidence that they are financially able to undertake a fairly ambitious enterprise.

Knighthoods bring troubles, too. No longer can we say Bill and Dan.