

## Prominent Topics.

**H. M. C. S. Niobe.** The repairs to the Niobe will, it is said, cost \$600,000, or 40 per cent. of her cost to Canada. Before the repairs are undertaken the whole question of Canada's naval policy should be settled.

**Railway Strikes.** The railway strikes in Illinois, Missouri, Texas and Louisiana have commenced and the shooting began at a very early stage. As THE CHRONICLE pointed out when the strikes were first suggested, the time is badly chosen. There were thousands of railway men out of work before the strikes commenced. The transportation business in the United States is not flourishing, and the winter threatens to be a hard one for the working men generally; with wages low or non-existent and cost of living high. If it comes to an endurance contest, the advantages are on the side of the railway companies. Any attempt to win the fight for the closed shop by bloodshed will speedily alienate public sympathy.

**Automobile Accidents.** One woman killed, two seriously injured and three men badly hurt by an automobile running into a fence at St. Anne de Beupre. Had the trouble been caused by an aeroplane, it would have made something of a sensation; because, having had only eighty-seven fatalities from aeroplane accidents, we are not yet accustomed to the idea. Automobile fatalities are now an old story; their victims are in the thousands; they kill more than the American railways; we have ceased to keep count. The explanation in this case is that the steering gear went wrong in rounding a sharp curve. This is just a little better than blaming the fence, but why should a defect in the steering gear cause so many injuries unless the car was going much faster than it should have gone round a sharp curve?

**Eighty-Seventh Victim of Aviation.** Cromwell Dixon, who was killed by an aeroplane accident at Spokane on Monday, was the eighty-seventh aviator to lose his life in a heavier-than-air flying machine, and the fifty-fourth this year. As there were no less than fifteen fatal accidents of this class last month, it will be seen that they are rapidly increasing in number. Most of the lives have been lost, not in useful aviation experiments but for the amusement of spectators at aviation meets. While it is highly probable that there is not enough known about aviation to prevent accidents altogether, the aviators have not learn much about their science if they cannot devise a code of regulations and restrictions which will greatly lessen this awful butchery for sensational amusement purposes. Unfortunately they seem willing to take gamblers' risks for the lot of money there is in the business. That aviation has advanced too far to be aban-

doned there can be little doubt; but if risky flights are to be encouraged by gate-money, it may become necessary for legislators who know nothing about aviation to legislate about gate-money. Dixon was seen by many Montrealers at the Lakeside meeting.

**Excessive Drainage of the Soil.** Some of the houses between St. Catherine and Sherbrooke Streets, west of University Street, are said to be in danger of collapsing through the subsidence of the soil. This in turn is attributed to the drainage and consequently the shrinkage of the clay with which the neighbourhood abounds, through the great excavations going on for sewers and basements of big buildings. This is probably the correct theory. St. Paul's Cathedral has been in danger from similar causes for a long time, and a commission has been appointed to endeavor to save the building from destruction. It would seem as though somebody ought to be held legally responsible for the damage. The man who buys real estate buys the surface and everything below it, including the clay and the water appertaining thereto.

**The Metropolitan Convention.** The Dominion convention of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company of New York was successfully inaugurated last evening by a banquet at the Place Viger hotel, Montreal, at which upwards of 200 officers and agents of the company were present. The principal speaker, Mr. Haley Fiske, vice-president of the company, mentioned some interesting facts in regard to the Metropolitan's activities in Canada. There were, he said, 413,000 persons in Canada insured in the Metropolitan, whilst in the city and district of Montreal alone there were 148,000—or 20 per cent. of the total population. Last year the company had paid 4,700 death claims in Canada. The company had recently made additional deposits with the Dominion Treasury. Mr. Fiske also referred to the great work which the Metropolitan has begun in combatting tuberculosis—a work which was subsequently heartily praised by Mayor Guerin, as essentially humanitarian. The enthusiastic tone of last night's gathering augurs well both for the success of the convention as a whole and for the forward movement of the Metropolitan in Canada.

During August Canada's trade increased by no less than \$18,303,133, or nearly thirty per cent., as compared with August of last year. The total trade for the month was \$81,490,654, of which \$47,405,591 was in imports, a gain of nine millions. In exports the principal gain was in agricultural products, which totalled \$7,238,394, an increase of nearly five millions over the preceding August. For the first five months of the fiscal year trade has totalled \$330,522,426, an increase of \$34,705,645, of which \$22,629,971 was in imports entered for consumption.