

CURRENT EVENTS.

BY J. VROOM.

Further explorations in the Canadian Rockies, where great glaciers, high peaks and wonderful canons have recently been discovered within a short distance of the Canadian Pacific Railway, are to be made during the coming year.

It is estimated that about 16,000 farmers moved from the United States to Canada during the past year, most of them settling in the Northwest; and the outlook for a large immigration next year is excellent. These immigrants from across the border are the best class of settlers, with the exception of our own people. A large influx of French Canadians from the New England States is also looked for next year, principally to settle on the newly developed farming regions in the north of the province of Quebec.

A new gold field is said to have been found in our northern regions, in the country near Davis Strait, in the same latitude as the Klondike.

As the decreased output of coal in England is beginning to cause anxiety in respect to a future supply, new discoveries of coal are of great importance. The great coal fields of British Columbia, especially those of East Kootenay region, will yield some of the finest bituminous coal in the world; and there is in sight enough, it is estimated, to supply the needs of the whole world for 300 years, at the present rate of consumption.

The recent discovery of coal on the Zambesi, within 200 miles of Bulawayo, in Rhodesia, means a new source of wealth for our fellow subjects in South Africa. In quality it is said to be equal to the best Welsh coal. Coal has also recently been found on the western side of the Island of Spitzbergen, in the Arctic Sea.

But a little more than a thousand miles is now required to complete the telegraph system between Egypt and South Africa.

Thibet, it is rumored, is no longer satisfied to remain in subjection to China, preferring to be a vassal of either Russia or Great Britain instead.

Morocco has paid to the United States the indemnity asked for the murder of a citizen, and the affair is ended.

The United States has declined to interfere in the boundary dispute between Bolivia and Chili.

Much light has been thrown upon the history of ancient Babylon by recent explorations. We may now read, in a book of translations just published in London, official communications which were sent four thousand years ago to and from the seat of government, in the form of small clay tablets, each in a carefully addressed envelope; and learn from them much of the life of the people, which is curiously like our own in some respects. Canals, instead of railways, furnished means of communication. Taxes were collected, government works built and controlled, justice administered and business transactions recorded very much as they are to-day in

Eastern lands. All this is learned from the little clay documents which are found buried beneath the ruins of an ancient Babylonian city, and which were written about 2200 B. C. It is beyond the range of probability that any trace of our own paper libraries will last so long.

The Russian ice-breaking steamer "Ermack," which has on trials forced its way through ice fourteen feet thick, is now fitting out in England for an attempt to reach the North Pole. She will be commanded by Vice-Admiral Makaroff, of the Russian navy.

A CENTURY'S PROGRESS.

With the close of the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred has ended the most wonderful century of the Christian era, — wonderful in the increased knowledge of the earth and its inhabitants, past and present, and in the changes brought about in man's relation to his material surroundings. In philosophy, literature, music and art, perhaps, the nineteenth century has given to the world nothing that future ages will greatly value. Its triumphs lie in the domain of applied science, for the preservation of health, increased facilities of production, transportation and communication, and increased comforts and conveniences of life; and in the diffusion of knowledge, the widening of political franchise, and a practical recognition of the brotherhood of man. To the nineteenth century belong the railway and the steamship, and all the marvels of applied electricity; as do also photography and many of the lesser inventions and discoveries with which we are now familiar, including the bicycle, the sewing-machine, the type-writer, the friction match, and the manufacture and use of India-rubber. The reduction of aluminum and other metals now used in the mechanical arts; the discovery of the Roentgen rays, which render transparent many bodies that are opaque to the rays of ordinary light; the germ theory of contagious diseases, and the revelations of the microscope in connection with this theory; the use of anesthetics and antiseptics; and the general introduction of labor-saving machinery, will have a permanent effect upon the history of mankind; but the locomotive steam engine, first used in England in 1825, the submarine telegraph, connecting British North America with the mother country in 1858, and the completion of a ship canal through the Isthmus of Suez in 1869, are the three great achievements of the century.

A century ago, the inscription "unknown regions" covered a large part of the map of every continent except that of Europe. The British possessions, now including nearly one-third of the habitable globe, were then, exclusive of the British Islands and some of those "unknown regions," confined to the valley of the St. Lawrence and the maritime provinces of British America, some small territories in the East and West Indies, and a few trading posts and military stations in other parts of the world. The present situation in South Africa makes it of interest to note that England was then holding Cape Colony at the request of the Dutch, to protect it from the French. It was restored to Holland in 1803, re-occupied when another French