

THE TALK

A PECULIAR story comes from Edmonton concerning a coal fire. About sixty miles up the Saskatchewan there is a seam of coal twenty-two feet thick. It has been burning since August 23rd last, having been ignited from a prairie fire. Thirteen men dug a trench 22 feet deep and 400 feet long and the fire was stopped. The despatch adds that there is a seam "some nine miles up the river" which has been burning for nine years and cannot be extinguished. And this, too, just at a time when the people in the West wanted coal very badly!

Since Regina advanced from the capital of the Territories to the capital of Saskatchewan, it seems to have entered on a new era of prosperity. The building permits issued last year in the budding prairie city amounted to two million dollars. This is an excellent record for a city of 10,000. The Regina "Standard" figures it out that this means \$198 per head of the population as against \$127 per head in Winnipeg, and feels quite jubilant over the comparison.

Swift and Armour are great names in the beef trade, but it appears that there is a greater. The largest exporters of cattle in the world are said to be Gordon, Ironside & Fares, of Winnipeg, who during 1906 exported 73,500 head of cattle and 41,000 sheep. Of the cattle, 50,000 came from Western Saskatchewan and Alberta and the remainder from Western Ontario. It is well to remember that the West has products other than grain.

The Old-Boy-Association system is moving westward. The other day in Vancouver, the Bruce County Old Boys met and formed an organisation with T. F. Paterson as president and J. H. Kilmer as secretary.

A Government wheat elevator is being requested by the Vancouver Board of Trade. The Government has put elevators in for Montreal and is building one at Port Colborne, why not one in Vancouver? Alberta grain

is likely to increase her western shipment to the Orient and an elevator is a necessity. In 1905, over two million bushels went that way, in 1906 over three millions, and in 1907 five millions may go.

About a million dollars' worth of furs come into Edmonton every year. This season the furs are expected to be plentiful and of good quality, because the cold weather will make a thick growth of fur on the animals. About the middle or latter part of January the trappers come in from Lesser Slave Lake and Lac La Biche. Those from more northerly districts come later.

Montreal business circles are discussing a project to have a terminal company handle all wharf business. For nearly fourteen years the C. P. R. and G. T. R. have each handled their own cars on the wharf and this has occasionally led to attempts on the part of one to block the other, with consequent needless delays. The C. P. R.'s lease expires this year, and the Harbour Commissioners may make a new system.

This sort of suit is worth while. The Dominion Iron & Steel Co. is suing the Dominion Coal Co. for a little over fifteen million dollars damages, being the value of a ninety-year contract for coal of which the latter company grew tired. This is getting to be a big country.

The St. John, N.B., Board of Trade would like to have another railway west. The C.P.R. is all right, of course, but a little competition would not come amiss. They propose that the Intercolonial take over the New Brunswick Southern and extend it into the State of Maine.

The Ontario Government got nearly two hundred thousand dollars for the mining rights in the bed of Kerr Lake and 10 per cent. of the gross value of the output. If this mining business keeps up, Ontario may suffer the fate of Spain.

The provincial elections in British Columbia are to occur shortly. Premier McBride expects to be returned to power; Mr. J. A. MacDonald, member for Rossland and leader of the Opposition (Liberal) expects to defeat him; and the Socialists hope

to still hold the balance of power. It is not known yet what the electors expect.

Ontario is slowly but surely increasing its revenue from the railways. This year it gathers \$375,000 in taxes, one-half of which goes to the municipalities. The latter will thus receive 8 cents per head of the population. This is about double what they got under the old act.

McGill University is about to make its first appeal to the public in twenty-five years. Each student costs it from three to four times as much as he pays in fees. The annual expenditure is \$400,000, and another million dollars of endowment is needed to meet increasing needs.

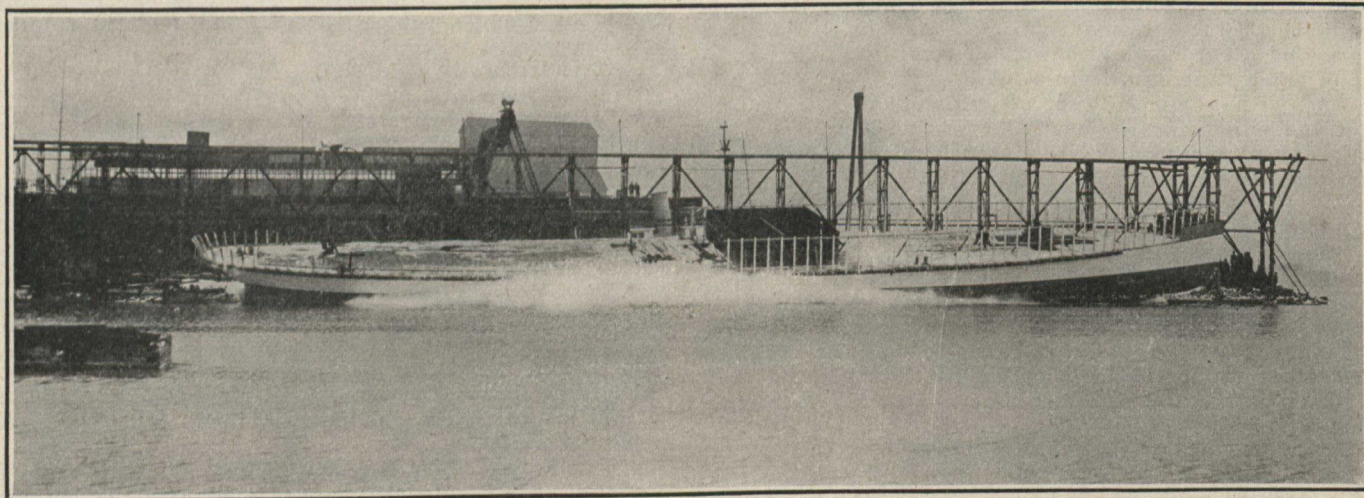
Last week the C.P.R. motor rail car was pictured. The announcement comes from Moncton that the Intercolonial Railway will build three such cars in time for the summer traffic.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux seems to be trying to beat the record of Sir William Mulock. He proposes to put a postal clerk on all west-bound steamers from Great Britain, to sort, assess for duty, and route parcels. This will enable them to be delivered more promptly.

English methods of crime detection are sometimes worthy of Sherlock Holmes. In order to conduct a betting raid on a public-house at Dudley the police drove up in an ambulance. This is even more adroit than the way in which Premier Whitney and Attorney-General Foy gathered in the Toronto Junction gamblers.

Provincial Mineralogist Robertson says British Columbia's mineral output for 1906 will reach \$24,000,000. He also states that he had visited the section of B.C. to be traversed by the G.T.P. and says that Guggenheims and other Americans are investing there. It is popularly selected as the site of the next mining boom.

The West is still struggling with the severe snow storms of an exceptional winter. The dark cloud as usual has its silver lining, for the snow must melt and moisten the earth. The West has more to fear from dry years than from severe winters.



Launching of "Rapids King," the R. and O. Navigation Company's new steamer, to be used on the St. Lawrence route. She was named by Mrs. Caverhill, of Montreal, wife of the chairman of the R. and O. Navigation Company's Executive Committee. Built by the Canadian Shipbuilding Co., Toronto.