

off Sydney harbour. This step was not taken, however, until the Minister had it pressed upon his attention that the faithful Alert was likely doing a little bit of January smuggling herself, and incidentally helping the Conservative candidate in the local bye-election for Victoria county. The contents of two suspicious barrels of flour and a case will be inquired into further, and also a report will be submitted as to the authority by which the candidate and his organizer took passage upon a Government tug in the month of January.

MR. ROBERT BICKERDIKE of St. Lawrence, Montreal, tried to abolish capital punishment in Canada, but did not succeed. Hon. Frank Oliver best voiced the objections to the measure.

"My sympathy is for the family and friends of the victim," said he. "I am for the protection of the settler upon the lonely prairies and the safety, security, and honour of his wife and family."

He instanced the gold rush in California in '49 and the similar rush in British Columbia in '64. In British Columbia the British system of cold, even-handed and inevitable justice under Judge Begbie, hanged the first murder, and after that there were no more. Whereas, California's palmy days of the "forty-niners" were the wildest days in the wild west. Similarly the Northwest Mounted Police had maintained the contrast on the Canadian plains.

HON. TOM CROTHERS spent an unhappy Friday with the coal strike of Vancouver Island in the House, and more is yet to come. He has "done his darndest" to settle the strike he told the House, but the men persist in calling it a "lock-out," and not a strike at all. Meanwhile strike-breakers are getting out the coal.

REDISTRIBUTION, based upon the census of 1911, seems to be the chief item on the Government programme this session. The shift of the balance of population in Canada westward will make itself noticeable, to the eye at least, in the re-adjustments of seats in the House. Whether it will be recorded in the Hansard report of the debates or not, is another question. The wise men of the East have always most to say. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick will each lose two seats, but it is likely that the committee which will have charge of the adjustment will follow Premier Borden's suggestion and leave Prince Edward Island's four seats alone. Little "P. E. I." only has the population of a ward in a big city such as Toronto or Montreal, but it is pointed out that the principle of allowing a bigger representation to rural communities than to urban centres favours Prince Edward Island, inasmuch as the people of the Garden of the Gulf are nearly all rural. The next House will have 234 or 235 members, with no less than 56 from west of the Great Lakes, an addition for the West of 22. The greatest loss is suffered by Ontario which, with two new ridings to be provided for the North, and three more for the city of Toronto, nevertheless must endure a net loss of four seats.

THE big report of the Transcontinental Commission of investigation has been tabled. Boiled down, it contains two assertions—one that the line west of Quebec cost \$40,000,000 too much; another, that the Quebec section through the New Brunswick wilderness costing \$35,000,000 should never have been built at all. There was no need of a line to compete with the Government owned line; the Intercolonial was already serving the country and needed all the traffic to make it pay expenses. The C. P. R. moreover has a line from Montreal to St. John. But that question having been already settled by Parliament and the people at the polling booths in 1904 and 1908, the Commission of construction could not have had much choice.

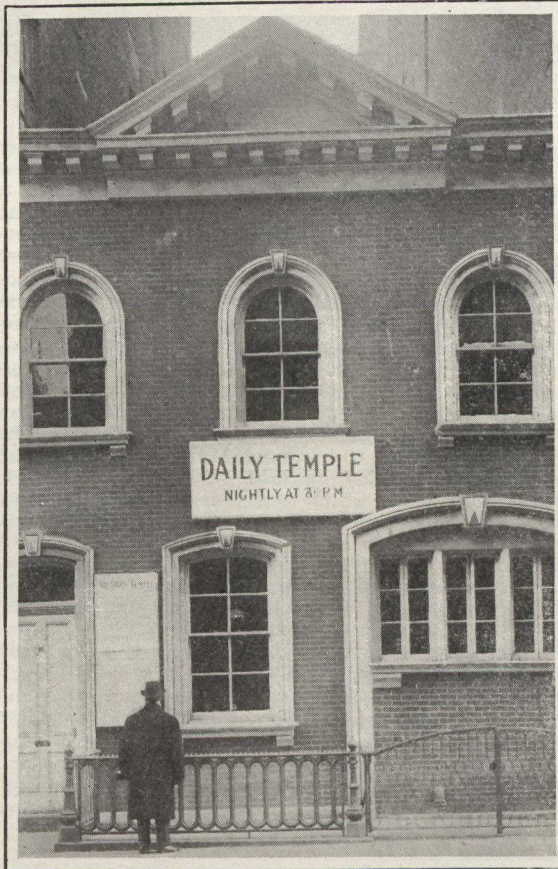
Of the \$40,000,000 item, however, other stories are told. The line seems to have been designed at an extravagantly high standard, and no expense was spared at any point or for any consideration—grades, curves, stations, engine houses, sidings, all of the best and most costly, even though the road for the greater part of its length was projected through the unopened wilderness. Bang-up, permanent construction was adopted from the first, instead of planning to have betterments installed as the traffic grew, as is the practice of straight-business railway companies. Certain big contractors made their pile—notably the Davis Company on the Nipigon section in northwest Ontario—simply by turning over the contract at a percentage without doing a tap of work themselves. The whole line was built on the frequently termed "visions" system of contract and sub-contract. Original government contracts were let and sub-let and sub-let again and again, divided up and parcelled out, so that the "station man" who actually took out the rock got perhaps 90 cents a yard for the work, while the original tender might have been \$2.00 a yard.

The fact that none of the four commissioners in charge of construction in behalf of the late government, was a practical railroad man, did not admit much likelihood of an economical job, and that result seems to be the worst that the investigators disclose. The line has been admittedly well built—too well built in fact, at least for present necessities, and no thought of expense or what the immediate traffic would bear deterred the men in charge.

S. H.



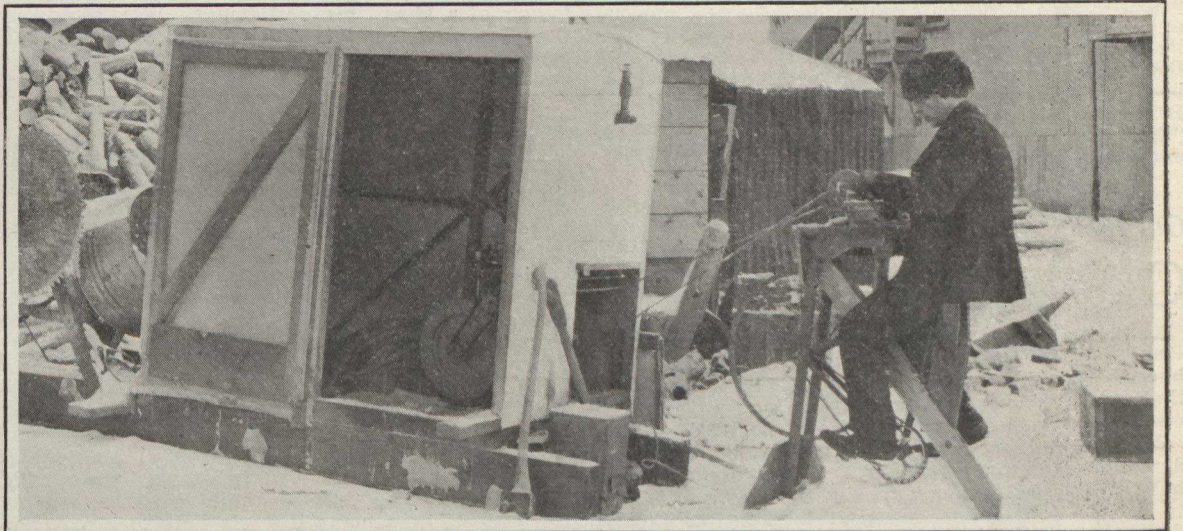
For three days lately Sherbrooke, P.Q., entertained an army of snowshoers, who held high carnival in motley abandon by day and by night with snowshoe parades, torchlight processions and peculiar pranks. This is the greatest annual snowshoe carnival in the world.



Here, at 35 East 32nd Street, New York, daily religious services are held for six different religious creeds. Each has its own minister, priest or leader. There is no Kikuyu controversy there.



The snowshoer, on the way down, has just received what is known as the "bounce," an agreeable diversion at the annual Snowshoe Carnival in Sherbrooke, P.Q.



A young man of White Horse, Yukon, who has considerable mechanical ability, has succeeded in making his gasoline engine pay large profits. In winter he uses his engine to drive the woodsaw shown. He charges \$2.00 for cutting a cord of sixteen foot wood into stove length. Whenever he has a spare moment he switches his power from the woodsaw to a portable grinding machine, and with this he does well, sharpening skates, knives, etc. In summer, when the woodsawing business is slack, he uses his engine in a launch, carrying passengers.

Photograph by Wilson, White Horse.