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**Mercantile Summary.**

SEVERAL dwellings in St. Roch, Que., were on the 4th inst. destroyed by fire. The loss was \$15,000, partially covered by insurance.

THE Dominion Business College, Toronto, has favored us with a striking map of the world, British possessions being colored a vivid red. Attached is an index to every country, with population and area. There is also a calendar from September, 1903, to August, 1904, inclusive.

THE Allan Steamship Line has placed a contract with a Belfast shipbuilding firm for the building of a turbine steamboat for the Liverpool-Canada mail service, to be the largest and speediest vessel of their fleet. Its length over all is to be 500 feet; gross tonnage, 12,000; indicated horse power, 10,000; speed, 17 knots. This means a shortening of the voyage by twenty-four hours.

THE annual report of the Boston and Maine Railroad shows that the gross earnings of the company (irrespective of leased lines) from operation for the year ended June 30th were \$33,738,984.26. The dividends declared were on preferred stock 6 per cent., and on common 7 per cent. The number of passengers carried during the year was 39,049,158. The number of tons of freight carried during the year was 19,084,796. The total number of miles of track operated by the company is 4,012, while that owned only amounts to 1,126, both figures including tracking and sidings.

THE Canadian Pacific Railway is gradually developing the idea of supplying its needs so far as possible out of its own resources. With this in view it has established a mining and metallurgical department in British Columbia, under the superintendency of Mr. W. H. Aldridge, of Trail, B.C. The company has a coal mine property about five miles from Banff, and this is being developed by a force of about fifty men. Prospecting parties are looking over other properties in British Columbia, and already the company has a large number of claims located, from which it expects to eventually get much of the steam coal it will use. No effort will be made, we understand, to supply coal for domestic or commercial uses.

SIR THOMAS SHAUGHNESSY, president of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, should be more or less of an authority on the labor question. It is worth noting that his views are certainly not in harmony with those expressed by some union leaders. He said the other day that one of the greatest difficulties the C.P.R. had to contend against in the west was its inability to get enough workmen and laborers. He felt safe in saying that during this year they could have employed from 3,000 to 5,000 more men than were available; that many more men could have been used in constructing new lines and in making improvements to those already built. All of the line's construction work, he said, was behind owing to this difficulty.

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