

COAST TO COAST.

Ottawa, Ont.—Hon. J. D. Hazen has given notice of a government bill providing for a federal loan of \$3,500,000 to the Quebec Harbor Commission to enable the commission to construct such terminal facilities as are necessary to properly equip the port of Quebec. The money is to be advanced from time to time as needed. The bill contains provisions similar to those in the act passed some years ago in regard to the Montreal Harbor Commission.

Vancouver, B.C.—At Nanaimo on March 4, at the opening session of the western branch of the Canadian Mining Institute the secretary drew attention to the better position British Columbia had reached in regard to loss of life in its coal mines. For the ten-year period, 1903-1912, the death rate was 5.08 killed per thousand employed, while for the five-year period, 1908-12, it will be found to have been 4.34 per thousand employed. Credit should be given, in justice to the provincial department of mines, the officials of which, during recent years particularly, have done their utmost to ensure the safety of coal mine employees.

Montreal, Que.—The announcement was made recently in London, England, of what is thought may prove an epoch-making invention in the steel trade. It is alleged that a process has been discovered for converting iron ore of any grade (even sands, of which hundreds of millions of tons exist ready for working) into steel of excellent quality without the aid of a blast furnace, the steel being produced direct, in a single operation. Tests have already been made of the steels so produced at an experimental plant and the results obtained are remarkable. No blast furnace is required, and no coke, which means an initial saving of capital expenditure as well as economy in production, while ores can be used which, at the present time, have no market value whatever. The ore is reduced by heat obtained from a gas, which is produced from slag. It is claimed that steel can be made at one-third of its present cost.

St. John, N.B.—Negotiations are now going on for the construction of the final 225 miles of the Canada and Gulf Terminal Railway connecting the present terminus at Matane with the Basin of Gaspé. The projected line runs through the very centre of the Gaspé Peninsula, about which very little was known up to a few years ago, yet the announcement is now made that complete surveys and locations have been made along the entire route, and that construction will probably be begun during the coming summer and continued for two or three years, as it will probably take that length of time to bring the rails down to the big government wharf now being constructed at Gaspé Basin, where there is at least forty feet of water at low tide. The federal government have subsidized this enterprise at the rate of \$3,200 per mile, and this sum will be doubled if the cost of the railway reaches a certain sum. On the other hand, the Quebec government have granted a subsidy of three thousand acres per mile for the entire 225 miles.

Montreal, Que.—Montreal electrical engineers have become interested in Mr. Denys L. Selby Bigge, the English electrical expert, who is promoting direct current transmission of electric energy for long distances. Some of the advantages of his system are as follows: Long distance transmission of electricity in bulk with ground return to distances of 400 to 500 miles. The electrification of railroads, owing to the low cost of transmission, and feeders for the line, which in conjunction with a new form of high tension direct current traction motors and trolley line, would greatly reduce the construction and

operative costs. The ease with which pulp mills or other industries in which direct current motors of high power are used, could be driven from the initial generating source, directly in series with the line, without any transformation either up or down—thus effecting great simplicity and efficiency in operation. The direct current system is not altogether new to Europe. The system has been in operation for four and a half years from Moutiers, in Switzerland, to Lyons. It was found possible to extend the system considerably, and has been linked up with water powers at Bretoire and Roselle.

Ottawa, Ont.—During the past few weeks the Canadian Northern Railway Company has been pressing the government to come to its assistance in a generous manner and assist the company to meet pressing financial obligations in connection with the completion of its transcontinental line. Sir William Mackenzie is now in Europe in connection with a general financial re-organization scheme, on behalf of the Mackenzie and Mann railway and allied enterprises. It is understood that the world-wide financial stringency has had a serious effect on the efforts to float new loans to keep all their gigantic and inter-related interests from suffering through the lack of ready money. The appeal for federal assistance has been pending for some time, but government action has so far been delayed by the exigencies of the naval issue. It is understood that the measure of assistance sought involves some twenty-five million dollars, partly by way of direct subsidies for the company's lines not hitherto subsidized from the federal treasury, and partly by way of a loan on the security of the company's railway lines. The details of the legislation have not yet been finally worked out, but it is understood that a general basis of agreement has been reached between the government and Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann. The railway company claims that, in view of the magnitude of its undertaking, it is entitled to federal assistance proportionate to that given to the C.P.R. and the Grand Trunk Pacific.

PERSONAL.

MILLIS M. FERGUSON, graduate of Queen's University in '04, has resigned his position of city engineer of Guelph, Ont.

MR. HOLLAND, assistant city engineer of Guelph, Ont., has been appointed temporary city engineer in place of Millis Ferguson, resigned.

GEO. T. CLARK, B.A., graduate of Toronto University in Civil Engineering, of class '06, has resigned his position as city engineer of Saskatoon.

MR. R. H. THOMSON, late city engineer of Seattle, Wash., now engineer in charge of Strathcona Park for the province of British Columbia, and Mr. C. H. Rust, city engineer of Victoria, B.C., have been requested by the provincial government to report upon the proposed sewage scheme for greater Vancouver, which has recently been submitted to the various municipalities interested by Mr. R. S. Lea, of Montreal. The government have agreed to guarantee the interest upon bonds to the extent of five million dollars, this being the amount that Mr. Lea recommends should be expended at once. The remaining five million dollars to be spread over a period of some years.

MR. B. RAYMOND PHILBRICK has been appointed head of the buildings branch of the Department of Public Works, Saskatchewan, taking the place of Mr. W. P. Colman, who has resigned by letter from England. Mr. Philbrick has been in the employment of this government for the past three years, and is a surveyor who commenced his