

can port." Mr. Blair expects so to work the Intercolonial as to prevent this in future. The question is really one of routes. When the Grand Trunk was built Portland was fixed on as the best port for shipment. Now special efforts are made to develop our own Canadian lines of communication through ports in our own country, and properly. But the competition of the American route cannot be got rid of; it may to a large extent be neutralized if we are willing to pay the price for neutralization in diminished rates on our Government road. But unless we exact paying rates the Intercolonial cannot be made a success, which it ought to be. No one runs away with the notion that large profits can be made out of the Government railway, as one public man formerly amused himself with the notion that the canals would yield return enough to enable us to repeal all customs duties, but the capital employed on the road should earn its own interest. If that could be achieved such roads could be largely extended, but not otherwise unless under exceptional conditions. The greater part of our fifty or sixty million bushels crop of grain, Mr. Blair reminds us, passes on its way to Europe through United States channels. This is not a desirable state of things, and with 14 feet of water in our canals it ought no longer to be inevitable. But unless the Canadians engaged in carrying our produce adopt the best improvements, which they have not yet done, success will not be possible.

In the inquest on the death of Mrs. Rogers, killed by a street car on Church street, the jury impartially distributes blame and exoneration. It finds that the driver of the cab in which the unfortunate lady was riding contributed to the accident by his negligence; that the motor-man did his duty; that the car was being driven at a dangerous rate of speed, and that the fender used was not the best available. They add that the responsibility for these defects rests with the management of the Toronto Railway Company. It is likely that some steps will be taken to enforce the responsibility of the company.

A letter in the Times points out that the great loss of British lives in the Boer war is due largely to a defective administration of the artillery. When reinforcements were thrown into Natal, in September, to meet the invasion, a number of field guns were sent, raising the whole number at Ladysmith to 36, there was not amongst them a single gun capable of firing common shell; and if it had not been for the Naval guns, much worse than has happened would have had to be borne. This mistake is attributed to a change in the artillery organization, which an attempt has been made to carry on on exactly the same lines as the infantry. It is hinted that suitable guns were in the depot in Natal, and that the officer whose business it would have been to see to their utilization did not know of their existence. The Howitzer batteries which ought to have been sent across the ocean at first were delayed, not for want of guns for the necessary guns existed. If the Howitzer batteries had gone in time the terrible loss of life in carrying difficult positions by infantry might have been largely saved. The batteries sent out later may be expected to give better results.

THE ELEVATOR QUESTION.

In the discussion to which the Conners syndicate contract has given rise, the fact why there were no competing Canadian bids comes out. The carrying trade has got so much in the habit of folding its arms and calling on the Government for aid, that it believed it might force the

Government to build elevators for grain export. This is given as the reason why no competing bid showed itself in opposition to the Conners syndicate. If the Government had done as this expectation presumed they must, would the people who demanded this Government aid have been willing that the elevator charges should cover the interest on the cost of the works and provide a sinking fund to return the capital? Was that, in fact, not the thing farthest from their thoughts?

The bargain made by the Montreal Harbor Commissioners with the Conners syndicate may be open to objections, but much of the criticism of it is beside the mark, and some of it is little short of childish. There are people who believe, or at least profess to believe, that the whole thing is a plot against the Canadian route, hatched in the United States in the interest of the American route. Has it occurred to these critics that this would be a costly pastime of obstruction, if pursued as it would have to be, at a cost of something like \$4,000,000? How is the syndicate to be reimbursed this expenditure, to say nothing of the interest upon it? The only answer is, of course, out of the profits of the American trade. Does anybody believe that it would be possible to adjust the burthen to the different parts of that trade? It is quite true that extensive trade combinations sometimes permit a part of their purchases, in the form of machinery and buildings, to fall out of use; but when this is done, the reason is that their employment, owing to some disadvantage which attaches to them, could not be made to pay. The St. Lawrence Canal equipment, when proper elevator power is added, will be the most perfect machine between the West and the East for the conveyance of freight; and if the owners of inferior appliances in the States, owned the Montreal elevators, they would be only following abundant precedents if they permitted the least capable to fall out of employment. If that were done, greater use of the St. Lawrence canals would be made than we can at present have any true conception of.

The attempt to defeat the Conners syndicate bargain has for its object to force the Government to build the elevators, without the prospect of getting from them sufficient tolls to pay interest on the transaction. The opponents, except for the purpose of opposing, have shown no energies; no constructive powers to supply the place of the contract which they wish to annul. This attempt to nationalize the elevators, is made not for the public benefit but for private interests.

The cry of monopoly is plausible, monopoly being a thing manifestly opposed to the general interest. Care should certainly be taken not to permit any one company to monopolize, especially as it is practically by way of gift, of too large a portion of harbor space and accommodation at Montreal. Here relative monopoly has to be guarded against. Legal monopoly is, of course, out of the question; but it cannot be denied, that the wielders of \$4,000,000 worth of apparatus would be formidable, and if it ever became necessary to compete against them, the task would be financial child's play. The privileges granted may be, as is complained, excessive; we should find the most decisive proof of this in a competing offer which would undertake the same work on better terms. Until that proof is forthcoming, critics, in the same line of business, will have done nothing to make good their right to a hearing. Mere obstruction, calling on the Government for largesses, is a game that can no longer be successfully played. It has been played a long time and with a success which it did not deserve.

This discussion has brought prominently out state-