Sault Ste. Marie rapids, and a duplication of the enormously expensive channel cut in the rock at the Lime Kiln Crossing in Detroit river. The insatiable demands of the Lake Carriers cause the "Detroit News" to speak its mind in the following way:

> The main point to be borne in mind, however, is that if the public has been submitting to the exactions of this organization in the past with the idea that its ambitions and demands would finally be satisfied, the time has arrived for waking from the dream. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that, in the interest of dividends, [which is the other name for lower rates of transportation], the steel trust and its allies will interminably deepen the draught of its hold as often as Uncle Sam can be induced to spend more millions in digging out the bottom of the river. Practically speaking, the whole benefit of the millions on millions already expended now goes to a combination which, under tariff privileges, sees to it that the consumer has no share in the savings effected by governmental generosity, but absorbs to itself all the results of the economy effected by vastly expanded tonnage capacity. The demand is absolutely insatiable, the cost unlimited, and the benefits, while possibly proportionate, are, with the exception of an insignificant proportion, absorbed to a few. The only gratitude displayed by the combinations served is their lively sense of benefits to come.

The people of the United States have not, it is contended, reaped nearly as much benefit from all this deepening of the water-courses as the vessel owners have done, and these gentlemen may well rest and be thankful for the practical doubling of the depth of water in the harbors and connecting streams. So the "News" contends, and we think with force, that Uncle Sam might well devote a few years to more careful lighting and regulation of the channels already provided, thus increasing materially the safety and facility with which they are navigated, without inordinate cost to the nation which reaps such scanty rewards for its outlay. Persistent demands on the U. S. Treasury may result in naval engineers being sent from Washington to report more closely than ever before upon the various engineering schemes propounded, with a view to getting round the navigating difficulties of Detroit river and St. Clair river and lake. There is the project, pronounced feasible, to cut a canal from Lake St. Clair through the Tilburys and Romney township to Lake Erie. But this would get rid of Detroit river shallows alone. Another scheme, less favored, had it in view to connect Lakes Huron and Erie by a canal through Middlesex and Elgin counties. Then the proposed canals or water routes from Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario are by no means moribund schemes any more than the French River, Lake Nipissing and Ottawa river scheme, if we bear in mind, as we cannot but bear in mind, the probable future pressure of Canadian North-West grain eastward. It is well to recall, too, that a charter was applied for, but we believe not obtained, at the last session of Parliament by the Canadian Canals Corporation, whose engineer, Mr. H. C. Spalding, proposes to utilize a different route, what he calls the Isthmian Canal route, along the higher land between Lakes Ontario and Huron. This, he contends, has its advantages. In any case there should be a limit to the increase in size of carriers on the Great Lakes, just as there assuredly is a limit to the depth to which dredges can go in the connecting rivers. Reason and safety must soon call halt.

FIRE WASTE FOR TEN MONTHS.

The fire loss in the United States and Canada for ten months of this year is greater than that for the like period of any one of four years preceding, allowance being made for the conflagrations of 1904: $134,000,000 in 1901, $124,000,000 in 1902, and $125,381,000 for 1903 (ten months each) are surpassed by the $143,703,000 of this year. The fire losses for the month of October, as compiled from the "Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin" records aggregate $12,267,000. The following comparative table will show the losses by months for the first ten months of 1903, 1904, and 1905:

	1903.	1904.	1905.
January	$13,166,350	$21,970,200	$16,378,100
February	16,090,000	90,051,000	25,591,000
March	9,907,650	11,212,150	14,751,400
April	13,549,000	23,623,000	11,901,350
May	16,366,800	15,221,400	12,736,250
June	14,648,350	10,646,700	11,789,800
July	12,838,600	11,923,200	13,173,250
August	8,428,350	9,715,200	11,435,600
September	9,939,450	14,387,650	13,715,250
October	10,409,800	12,866,200	12,267,000
Total ten mos..	$125,381,350	$221,426,700	$143,703,000
November	13,589,550	11,515,000	......
December	17,224,700	19,422,350	......
Total for year..	$156,195,600	$252,364,050	......

During the month just closed there were 282 fires of a destructiveness, each, of $10,000 or more. Twenty of these burned up from $100,000 to $200,000 each. In the opinion of the journal quoted, even in the face of these losses this year the fire insurance companies have fared exceedingly well because of the liberal rates they are now receiving, and, as a consequence, insurance stocks are very strong. It is likely that history will repeat itself and that rate wars in various sections may be expected toward the latter part of 1906.

THE FUR OUTLOOK.

While it is as yet too soon to prognosticate very surely the future course of events in the world's fur market, it may be averred that prices at present for all kinds of skins are the firmest perhaps in the history of the trade. The same tendency may indeed be seen in practically every line of commodity, and while at present there is nothing to show that such a thing is likely, there is little doubt that when values are at such an extremely high tension as they are, a very small unlooked-for hitch is liable to cause a slump.

As far as Russian stuff is concerned, such as lambskins, ermine, squirrel, marmot, etc., distribution has already taken place and nothing, therefore, can now happen to adversely affect the consumption. The close of the Russo-Japanese war has already had a good effect, and a considerable rise in prices has taken place since the purchases were made. Indeed, there would be no inconsiderable profit in shipping such goods back to Europe at the values now prevailing. The world demands fine Persians, and they are not in very large supply. The actual advance in the price of these skins may be placed at $1 per skin.