

formation which he recited; but he only received three votes on a division. This was not a proposal to go into a fishing enquiry, but only "to make investigation into the matters as set forth in said information;" and it is not quite apparent why it should have been limited so as not to cover all specific allegations. As it is, the whole enquiry falls to the ground.

Railway Commissioner Martin notified the C. P. R. that the Portage extension would cross the Manitoba South-western colonization branch at Headingly. But the latter objected to the plans of the intended crossing after inspection, and is expected to uphold the objection by an appeal for an injunction. This, if unsatisfactory, indicates an improved method of procedure. There is, we imagine, this time, no flaw in the procedure of Commissioner Martin, and objection to a particular form of crossing is not unintelligible, though it is not possible to be certain, under the circumstances, that it is made in good faith and not for the purpose of causing delay.

OUR GREAT WATER WAY.

After many gradations, the channel in Lake St. Peter has attained a depth of twenty-seven and a half feet. At first eleven feet was all that was aimed at, but by degrees, with the increase in the size of ocean vessels, we have gone deeper and deeper, trying to keep pace with the increasing draught of steamers, and now we can boast that the largest ocean vessel can reach Montreal. At one time there was an expectation that continuous navigation to the Upper Lakes by ocean vessels would be established, but that dream has vanished. The feat is possible, but the continuous voyage would not pay, and it is now a settled thing that a break at Montreal must take place, dividing the ocean from the inland navigation. If it had not been for the Lake St. Peter canal Quebec must have been the head of the sea navigation. This was an economic question which, sooner or later, was bound to settle itself, in favor of the longer ocean route. The railway, great as are its achievements, cannot compete with water navigation, such as exists between Quebec and Montreal; and the invariable rule was followed that ocean navigation is continued the greatest possible distance. Henceforth all the ocean steamers will pass on with their passengers to Montreal; a local loss to the city of Quebec is coincident with a boon to the whole country.

The St. Lawrence carries down its bosom more than the commerce of Canada, if not all of that; a part of Western American export trade seeks this outlet. When the thirteen United States separated from Great Britain and from Canada, the new Republic did not obtain a right to navigate the St. Lawrence; and a long time elapsed before this navigation was conceded. One reason was that the navigation of the Mississippi, which had been secured to England by the Treaty of 1783, was withheld by the Treaty of Ghent; and the nation abridged in its privileges of navigation did not feel like making a concession to the nation from

which the restriction had come. Successive American Administrations, claiming the right to navigate the St. Lawrence, met with a refusal. As a matter of fact, England could not present any solid claim to a renewal of the right to navigate the Mississippi after the discovery had been made that that river nowhere touched British territory. In 1783, when the United States assumed to give Great Britain this right, she was not in a position to give possession. She was not herself in possession of the mouth of the river. The policy of withholding from the United States, for a period of sixty years, the right to navigate the St. Lawrence may well now be a subject of doubt. It is difficult to see what was gained by it. The practical value of the navigation would not have been much before the canals were constructed. When it was given, the concession was made irrevocable, though other parts of the treaty, which must be deemed to have furnished an equivalent, have vanished. It is, of course, now an object to secure all the American trade we can on our great river.

In old times the French used to consider the navigation of the lakes a part of that of the River St. Lawrence, and the Nipigon was sometimes indicated as the upper end of the river which flows into the ocean. This long line takes us through the St. Clair flats, where the Americans have made a subaqueous canal, apparently on Canadian territory, and the Sault Ste. Marie, where Canada is on the point of commencing an independent canal. When this is done, this grand chain of navigation will have received its highest development. There is already a canal on the American side; but experience tells us that contingencies are liable to occur in which that canal may be closed to Canadians. This happened at the time of the Red River rebellion, and if the threatened retaliation had been carried into effect, we might again have been blocked at this point. An independent canal will prevent a recurrence of this obstruction.

But, as we have said, the inland and the sea navigation will always be separate and distinct; carried on in different kinds of vessels, each suited to the water in which they move. The internal navigation has in its development followed the line of the sea navigation; there has been the same tendency to make use of vessels of increasing size. But the two kinds of vessels maintain their distinctive character, and will continue to do so. This lake and river navigation has no parallel in North America, and practically no limit can be put to its capacity. While the lake vessels have been growing larger, our canals have need to be increased; a greater depth of water was found necessary to be attained, locks required to be enlarged. Is this process still to go on? The size of the ocean vessels continues to show a tendency to increase; is it certain that the lake vessels have attained their maximum size? We hope that the day may come when we can rest from the work on the canals which we have been so long doing. This great system of water communication could not be carried on to the best advantage

till we had fitted our great water way, in its entire length, to receive the largest class of vessels adapted to its separate parts; we shall soon have accomplished this: may we then hope to rest from this labor?

MONTREAL FIRE APPLIANCES.

The new chief of the Montreal Fire Brigade, Mr. F. Benoit, has lost no time in setting about making acquaintance with his men and learning what are the capabilities and the defects of the department, and defects there appear to be. On one day last week he set out, accompanied by his sub-chief and two aldermen, one of whom is chairman of the Fire Committee of the Council, to visit the fourteen fire stations of the city. The party did it, but the day's work was a long one, ending at nearly seven p.m.

Among the arrangements at the stations which this visit brought into prominent notice is the extraordinary one of each fireman providing his own bed-clothing. Hence it comes that the variety in style, quantity, and cleanness at the different stations is remarkable. We agree with Mr. Benoit that out of a fireman's pay he cannot have much to spare for bedding, and we trust the chief may be able to get the appropriation he desires from the Council to provide bedding for the men. The crowded and unsanitary condition of the bed-rooms at several of the stations has long been known to some. It is just as well that certain of the defects of the premises have been made known to the public in the *Gazette*. For instance: at the central station there is neither bathroom nor water closet. In No. 9 the roof of the sleeping room leaked and the cellar below was damp. At No. 10 the sleeping apartments were too small and were crowded, besides, up to the stables, whose odors filled them. At No. 2 the bed-room skylight would not open. It was remarked by the chief that a single penitentiary prisoner has more room in his cell than is allotted to four Montreal firemen at some of the stations. At the central station, one of the bed-rooms was found "in an unsanitary condition," and the stove useless. And at No. 3, Wellington street, there was insufficient stable room, inadequate sleeping room, no drain to the stable, and neither a cupboard for the men's clothing, nor apparently any room for it if provided. No. 5 needs and is getting a new floor. New harness and a new stable are asked for at No. 9. The harness is "bad" at No. 10 and "very bad" at No. 14; new is needed at No. 12. There is lack of ventilation at No. 7 station, the men's bed-room disgracefully small and filled with bad odors from the stables.

This is a sufficiently plain *expose* of the actual and most discreditable state of things in an important department which is one of the city's safeguards. It is amazing that a body to which the city of Montreal owes so much, and of which it professes to be so proud, should be thus ill-treated. It is due, Alderman Stevenson declares, to the cheese-paring policy long followed by the council. That gentleman