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Mercantile Summary

It is believed in Ottawa that the Grand Trunk Railway has sold its Parry Sound branch to the Canadian Northern Railway.

The pumping engine recently bought by the city of Toronto for nearly \$250,000, and with a capacity of 15,000,000 gallons, has just been tested, and the result shows that it is 4½ per cent. above the requirements called for.

We learn from Ottawa that the contract between the Dominion Government and the Allan Steamship Company for the carriage of the trans-Atlantic mails has now been completed on behalf of the Government. The bargain is for five years from next summer, and provides for the addition of two new eighteen-knot boats to the Allans' fleet.

A demand of assignment has been made upon Désiré Levesque, general storekeeper at Ste. Anne des Monts, on the Gaspé coast. Last summer Gustave Chouinard, of St. Elie d'Oxford, Que., formerly an insurance agent, began storekeeping in a small way. He has already become involved, and has arranged to pay his creditors 20 per cent. of their claims, for which proportion, it appears, they are disposed to settle.

The New York Lumber Company have finished their cut of lumber off the tract of 45,000 acres near Gasperaux Lake, N.S., which they purchased from Mr. S. P. Benjamin, of Cornwallis, N.S., and are now awaiting the break-up of the ice in the lakes to raft down 4,000,000 feet of it. It will then be hauled to the mills at Kentville, converted into deal, when the greater part of it will be sent by train to Kingsport and shipped to New York and other American ports.

The charter possessed by the Hamilton, Caledonia and Lake Erie Company has been extended by the Ontario Railway Committee, so that it now has to be built to Caledonia in two years, to Dunnville in four years, and the whole within five years. The company also seeks confirmation of its power to bore for gas and to build a pipe line for the conveyance thereof. The committee are still discussing this point, objection having been made to the exportation of gas or to any connection with monopolies in the United States.

What is termed the fastest passage on record from Liverpool to a Canadian port is announced from Halifax on 29th March, thus: The Allan Line steamer "Virginian," with a total of 1,582 passengers, 572 of them first and second cabin, arrived at Halifax from Liverpool at seven o'clock this evening after the fastest passage on record. Her time of passage with mails on board was six days and five hours, beating the best previous record (her own) by nine hours. She followed the long course, and passed 300 miles south of Cape Race.

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On Friday last there arrived in the harbor of New York eleven thousand immigrants, on board of seven steamships, from European ports. This number is the record for a single day which has been made thus far during the annual spring rush. "To-day's arrivals include English, Irish, Germans, Swedes, Hungarians, Italians, Portuguese and Russians."

We, in this country, are accustomed to hear of the wonders of rapid mechanical production of certain merchandise as illustrated in the United States. Here we have from the London "News" word of the making by machinery of a boot in seven minutes. This is to be seen at Gamage's, in Holborn, London. Very likely this is in part the result of American machines. In any case the result is achieved in London.

It is stated by "Harper's Weekly," on the authority of a United States naval officer, that the present relative order of warship tonnage of the eight first-class powers is as follows:

Nation.	Tonnage.
Great Britain	1,537,682
France	614,045
Germany	415,824
United States	386,428
Italy	261,411
Japan	253,401
Russia	226,780
Austria	112,336

There is some idea of making the Elder-Dempster steamship service between this country and Mexico a fortnightly one, and it looks as though the development of trade of recent months would justify such an extension. Mr. D. W. Campbell, manager of that line, who has just returned from Mexico, says that Canada's exports in nine months to the republic have been \$900,000, and that new and previously unthought-of fields of commerce have presented themselves, especially in the State of Yucatan, where the people are rich and extensive buyers of Canadian articles of export. The matter of return freights is important, and if certain things can be brought about, he believes our import trade will be considerable. It is understood that if the Government will apply the West Indian preference clauses to Mexico a good deal of sugar can be brought to Canada from the Southern Republic.