

**"A Phonograph
to a Deaf Man."**

Again, this year, the trunk line roads from Buffalo to New York have declined to make the rate concessions which shippers of wheat have urged. Export firms are up in arms. The head of a representative New York house remarked this week:

"The crux of the entire question is that Montreal is taking all the business from Fort William, Duluth and Chicago because the lake and rail interests have not sense enough to compete with the all-water charges. Business through New York, Boston and Philadelphia is entirely out of the question, as the lake and rail rates are 3c higher than those at which the grain can be shipped via Canadian ports. It is another instance of Canadian enterprise which realizes conditions and provides for them so that it gets the business."

Until three years ago United States railroads made lower rates during the period between April first and the middle of October, fixing the basis on wheat at 4c a bushel, compared with the rate of 5½c existing now the year round. At one time even a 3 cent rate was granted.

From Duluth to Georgian Bay points the rates are practically the same as from Duluth to Buffalo, namely, from 1½ to 2 cents. But for rail rates beyond, the figure is 4 cents to Montreal, whereas it is 5½ to New York. Also the elevator charges, which are included in the Montreal rate, are 1¼ cents extra in the case of New York.

The railroads state that they gave the 4c rate a recent trial and found that it failed to divert traffic from Montreal, but the shippers contend that the reduction (during May and June last) was for a period when wheat was practically on a famine basis. The concessions, therefore, as the New York Journal of Commerce remarks, "partook of the nature of a present of a phonograph to a deaf man."

Steamship lines from New York are seeking to remedy the situation by quoting lower rates than those charged from Montreal; but, thus far, without much avail.

**Montreal's
Vital Statistics.**

The annual report of the Montreal Board of Health shows that the birth rate in 1908 was 38.43, the highest in the world, and 2.38 over that of the previous year. The birth rates in some other large cities during the same period were as follows: London, England, 25.7; Paris, 18.7; New York, 28.5; Berlin, 23.3; Lille, 24.9; Madrid, 28.5; St. Petersburg, 27.5; Buenos Ayres, 34.31.

The births are classified as follows: French Canadians 10,210 or 44.04 per thousand; other Catholics 1,641 or 29.51 per thousand; Protestants 2,020 or 30.33 per thousand; Jews 735 or 28.26 per thousand. The total number of births was 14,606.

As usual the death rate also was high, the total

number being 8,723 or 22.95 per thousand (0.39 higher than the previous year) divided as follows: French Canadians 6,051 or 26.10 per thousand; other Catholics 1,191 or 21.40 per thousand; Protestants 1,200 or 18.01 per thousand; Jews 281 or 10.80 per thousand. The death rates in some other cities were as follows: Buenos Ayres, 15.2; London, 15.1; Paris, 18.6; New York, 18.6; Berlin, 14.8; Lille, 21.1; Lyons, 20.0, and Madrid, 27.2.

Madrid alone shows a higher death rate than Montreal and in Madrid, as we have shown, the birth rate also compares unfavourably with that of Montreal. Over half of the total number of deaths in Montreal was among children under 5 years, or 55.14 per thousand; under one year of age the deaths were 40 per thousand. The death rate was highest in St. Denis Ward, 32 per thousand and lowest in St. Andrew's Ward, 11.07 per thousand. In considering the significance of these figures it must not be forgotten that Montreal is a great centre for hospitals and asylums, to which patients and illegitimate children from all parts of the country naturally gravitate in great numbers. But for these factors Montreal's death rate would probably be under the average.

The marriage rate in 1908 was 9.35 per thousand a decrease of 1.75 per thousand.

**Royal Commission
on Tuberculosis.** The Royal Commission on Tuberculosis will meet in Montreal next week. It is composed of Mr. Charles M. Holt, K.C., Drs. E. P. Lachapelle, J. G. Adami, T. G. Roddick, J. J. Guerin, J. E. Dube, Elz. Pelletier, and J. Lesperance of Montreal, and M. J. Ahearn, C. R. Paquin, A. Simard and A. Rousseau, of Quebec, G. Bourgeois, of Three Rivers, and Lieut.-Col. Jeffrey H. Burnland, of Montreal. Dr. M. C. N. Valin, of Montreal, is the secretary.

The Commission was appointed by the Dominion Government upon the recommendation of the Montreal Board of Trade, the Chambre de Commerce, and the Montreal Tuberculosis League. Its object is to study the medical and legal aspects of the tuberculosis question and it will report to the Government next spring.

**Ten Millions for
Irrigation.**

President Taft announces that he will ask Congress for an appropriation of \$10,000,000 for irrigation purposes in the West. In this, as he states, he is simply carrying out Mr. Roosevelt's policy. The spending of public money on irrigation is one more indication that the natural agricultural lands of the United States are nearly all taken up, and this means in turn that we are only on the threshold of the world's rush to occupy the lands of the Canadian West.