

## Mercantile Summary.

AN interesting discussion on the proposed French maritime canal between Bordeaux and Cette took place at the last sitting of the Geographical Congress, at St. Lazaire. M. Guenot, delegate of the Geographical Society of Toulon, pointed out that, apart from the great maritime canal, it was possible to cut a canal of medium width which would give every satisfaction to the population. M. Guenot was immediately contradicted by the partisans of the great maritime canal. They showed that the coasting vessels were at the present time not ships of 300 tons, but steamers with a tonnage double that amount, drawing five and a-half or six metres of water. Therefore a canal four metres deep would be of no use, the depth must be at least six metres. In that case, the canal would cost 600,000,000f., and under those conditions, they asked, would it not be well, by the expenditure of another 200,000,000f., to create a canal accessible to the largest existing commercial steamers and iron-clads?

ONE of the cleverest bank robberies in Canada was successfully accomplished in the Napance branch of the Dominion Bank some time between Friday night and Saturday morning last. On Saturday morning when the bank unlocked its doors for business the officials were unable to open the vault. A watchmaker was called in, but after following the usual procedure he had to acknowledge himself beaten, and the Manager of the bank, Mr. E. H. Baines, telegraphed to Toronto for an expert to come down and doctor the refractory lock. The Merchants' Bank kindly accommodated the Dominion Bank for the day's business. In the

evening the expert arrived and immediately set to work to open the vault. After several hours success crowned his labors. The safe proved as difficult of entrance as the vault, but the task was finally accomplished. The opening of the safe disclosed the fact that the bank had been robbed of \$32,000. The daring and accomplished villain had opened the combinations of the vault and safe, coolly extracted the money, and then as a further proof of his cleverness changed the combinations of both doors and walked out with a fortune. The bank building fronts on John street, one of the most frequented streets in town, and a light is kept burning in the buildings at night. The bank is a stone structure, and there is but one vulnerable spot in the whole building, a small wooden shed containing a passageway leading into the bank. The burglar gained admittance to this by boring holes in the block siding and removing the boards in the partition. Ten thousand dollars of the money was unsigned by the Manager, but the balance, \$22,000, bore his signature. Seldom are professional burglars fortunate enough to meet with a safe the combination of which they know.

### ONTARIO GAS FIELDS.

The United States geological survey has prepared a report on the production of natural gas in Canada, with special reference to the Ontario fields, of which the following is an extract:

"The two fields that supply by far the greater portion of the gas in Canada are the Welland and Essex county gas field in the Province of Ontario. The Welland county field is situated at the north-eastern end of Lake Erie, and the Essex county field is near the extreme north-western end of the same lake. The conditions

remain very much the same as described in the report for 1895, except that the Essex county field has been extended about two miles north-east of Leamington, making the entire field ten miles long and about one and one-half miles wide. The surface is only a few feet above the lake, and is almost a level. About thirty wells have been drilled in this field. The gas is found in what is considered the equivalent of the Clinton limestone, at a depth of 1,000 to 1,040 feet. The rock pressure is four hundred to four hundred and five pounds to the square inch.

"There are two companies in this field, the Ontario Natural Gas and Oil Co., Limited, and the Standard Oil and Gas Co., of Essex, Limited. The former company has two pipe lines, thirty miles long, furnishing gas to Detroit, Mich., and to Windsor, Walkerville, Kingsville, and Leamington, Ont. The last named place owns its own gas wells.

"The petroleum field in Lambton county supplies a number of farmers and a few clusters of houses with natural gas, and in Kent and Elgin counties there are many shallow surface wells which furnish a similar provision. There are also a number of shallow gas wells in the north-western part of Aldborough, Elgin county.

"The Provincial Natural Gas Co. has about fifty-five producing wells in Welland county, twelve to fifteen miles west of Buffalo, N.Y.; the wells are 850 to 900 feet deep, running back from the lake front for two and one-half miles. They are connected by a pipe line.

"Following are values of the Canadian output of gas in the past four years: 1893, \$6,488,000; 1894, \$6,279,000; 1895, \$5,852,000; 1896, \$5,528,000.

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