

and the number of tons of freight by over seven millions, as compared with the preceding year. The total earnings of railways for the last year were \$125,322,865, as compared with \$106,467,198 for 1905. The percentage of operating expenses to earnings was 69.5, as compared with 75.2 for the preceding year. For the first ten years from 1887 the proportion of operating expenses to income was 76.8, while for the last decade the average has been 69.1. The capital invested in Canadian railways has reached the large sum of \$1,332,498,704. To this capitalization the following contributions have taken place:—Dominion Government, \$194,188,584; Provincial Governments, \$43,278,022; municipalities, \$17,125,164. Total, \$254,591,770. Included with these payments is the cost of the Intercolonial and the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railways.

In respect to passenger traffic earnings the report shows total earnings of \$33,392,188, for a total train mileage of 28,071,648, giving earnings per train mile of \$1,189.

In regard to electric railways the report shows a total mileage at the end of June last, of 813 miles. Ontario has 441 miles, and Quebec comes next with 198 miles. Net earnings for the year totalled \$4,291,834.

"The Cry of the Children."

Terrible beyond comment was the disaster of Tuesday afternoon, when sixteen children and their heroine principal perished in the burning of the Hochelaga Protestant School. That the children were of the tender ages of three to eight adds to the heart-rending pathos of an event that has called for sorrow and sympathy as perhaps no previous catastrophe has done in the history of Montreal. To say that everything possible to save the scholars was accomplished by the four lady teachers is but a meagre statement of the heroic efforts in which the life of one of them was sacrificed. To the firemen, too, full credit is due for their untiring energy, as well as to a number of onlookers who strove eagerly to rescue the little ones from the flames and suffocating smoke. For the city itself the immediate horror will pass—as all such horrors do pass—but in the heart of many a "Rachel weeping for her children" the agony of it all has scarce begun. The "cry of the children" must appeal as never before for adequate fire preventive and fire rescuing provision in the schools, not only of Montreal, but of every town and city in the Dominion. The absence of fire escapes has been much commented upon. In this connection there is doubtless some force in the statement of the chairman of the

school board to the effect that the attempted use of ordinary fire escapes is likely to add to the panic of small children. If this be likely, there is the greater need for so devising school buildings as to facilitate the most rapid exit. Nor among younger scholars must the efficiency of fire drill be too much counted upon. The installation of proper heating systems is another all-important matter as, too, is care on the part of those attending to heating apparatus. Without any reference to this particular instance, it may certainly be said that many fires reported as "cause unknown" are due to carelessness or lack of skill on the part of those who attend to heating arrangements.

Railroad Accidents.

The record of fatal railroad accidents in Canada last year shows a death list of 16 passengers, 139 employees and 206 others killed in various ways, a total of 361, as compared with 468 in 1905. Only one passenger in 1,749,361 was fatally injured. The horrors of railway disasters have been terribly in evidence during the past fortnight, and the lessons to be learned apply to Canadian as well as United States roads. After the recent wreck on the New York Central line to White Plains, The New York Tribune published a table showing that in the United States and Canada from August, 1906, to February, 1907, there had been 49 railway wrecks with loss of life. In these wrecks there were 351 persons killed and 474 injured. Since this compilation there have been further accidents, including the serious wreck on the Pennsylvania Railroad when over fifty persons were more or less seriously injured, and the more recent death-bringing accident on the Intercolonial.

Colonial Conference.

Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, has stated that the primary subjects at the forthcoming Colonial Conference will consist of the constitution of future conferences, preferential trade, defence and emigration. Lord Elgin advocates that certain subjects should be separately discussed with the ministers of state primarily concerned, and expresses the hope that the questions of universal penny post and an imperial cable system will be discussed in this way. Referring to reciprocal admission to certain professions, Lord Elgin says this question is complicated by technical considerations. He also affirms that it has been found impossible to overcome the difficulties in regard to a uniform system of patents, and that public opinion is not yet ripe for the admission of the metric system.