

CURRENT EVENTS.

The bubonic plague is still alarmingly prevalent in India, and is claiming thousands of victims every week.

According to official figures, the area of coal in Canada is larger than in any other country in the world.

The value of gold annually mined in British Columbia is now over five million dollars, the value of the silver over three millions, and of the copper and the coal over five millions each.

So great has been the success attained with camels imported into Rhodesia, South Africa, last year, that a government officer has been sent to India to purchase a larger number of these animals for the district.

Extensive irrigation works will be undertaken by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company near Calgary. If the plan proves successful, over three million acres of land now lying waste will be reclaimed and made fit for cultivation. There are to be two canals, a main canal thirty-five miles in length, and a secondary canal which, when completed, will be one hundred and fifteen miles long. The project is the largest of the kind ever attempted on this continent.

A sad fate has befallen the adventurous Hubbard, who set out last summer to explore the interior of Labrador. Unprepared for the difficulties of his journey, and with a very inadequate supply of food, delayed beyond all expectation by storms and accidents, and failing to find the abundance of game upon which he counted for subsistence, he finally died of starvation. His two companions, who were stronger than he, survived the hardships of the expedition and brought back the news of his death.

Recent surveys have shown that the part of Quebec lying between the St. Lawrence and James Bay is rich in spruce forests, in agricultural soil, in water-powers and in minerals, and that the climate is quite as good as that of the valley of Lake St. John, where there are thriving settlements.

The Yalu is a beautiful river, some 300 miles in length, and is navigable for a native craft for a distance of 60 miles, but steamers are unable to proceed beyond Antung. The stream has a rapid current, which will just now be swollen with the spring freshets, for the winter climate is much the same as our own. The tides in the Yellow Sea are higher than anywhere else in the world outside of the Bay of Fundy; making the crossing difficult in the estuary. The river itself, therefore, is a very strong defence of the Russian position.

The immigration of United States settlers, which is bringing into our Northwest Territories experienced farmers from the Western States, has begun early this year, and will probably increase from year to year for some years to come. Immigrants are also expected from New Zealand, where the advantages offered by the Canadian west are claiming attention.

It is rumored that the Japanese government will experiment with war balloons and airships.

The governments of Italy and Austria have concluded an agreement regarding affairs in the Balkans, which is considered as putting an effectual stop to the troubles in the Balkan states and preventing the possibility of their being used to aid a Macedonian uprising in the spring.

It is expected that ten thousand troops will be sent to Canada, as a part of the new plans for strengthening the defences of the empire. It has been decided also to make Halifax one of the greatest coaling stations of the empire, and to this end the coaling piers in the dockyard will be enlarged.

A steamship route between Halifax and Galway, for the conveyance of mails and passengers is advocated by a member of the Transportation Commission that has recently visited the Atlantic provinces. It would be a thousand miles shorter than the route from New York to Liverpool, and would be of inestimable advantage to Canada and to the empire.

The British Antarctic expedition, which sailed from London in the summer of 1901, is returning. No new coast line of any great extent has been discovered, but the results are believed to be of very great importance in other directions, and Captain Scott and his men are expected to bring back much valuable information regarding the Antarctic continent and the waters along its coast.

The Belgians deny the stories of atrocities in the Congo Free State, saying that the stories were founded wholly upon charges against one sentry for cruelty to a native boy, and that these charges have proved to be false. The stories, nevertheless, seem to have a strong foundation in fact, and the governments of Great Britain and the United States have both been asked to interfere for the protection of the 20,000,000 natives.

In reply to a question as to why a change had been made in the flag floating over the parliament buildings at Ottawa, the Minister of Public Works said that the flag heretofore used was a Canada merchant marine flag, (the red ensign with the Canadian coat-of-arms in the fly,) and when the department was purchasing a new flag it got the national flag, the Union Jack, and put it there instead. There is only one national flag.

The natural outlet for the products of the Northwest is through Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait, saving 800 miles in transportation to Liverpool; as compared with Montreal. So says the Canadian explorer, J. W. Tyrrell, in a recent account of his explorations in that region and in Newfoundland and Labrador. The strait is navigable with powerful vessels for six months in the year; and the bay is open all the time, although the harbors freeze over. Port Churchill is, he thinks, the best harbor on the coast of Hudson Bay, and could hold half the British navy. Newfoundland he finds rich in mineral resources, and Labrador may prove to be one of the most valuable mining countries in the world.