

Prominent Topics.

Death of the Emperor of Japan.

The world is the poorer for the death of Mutsuhito, Emperor of Japan. It is usual to attribute to him personally the conversion of the Japanese system of absolutism into a constitutional monarchy, and the adoption of the best elements of western civilisation which accompanied that development. Many observers will, however, recall that it is one of the most cherished traditions of the Japanese people to attribute to the virtue of their emperor credit for all good fortune, including their victories by sea and land. Nevertheless, it is incontestable, that the marvellous reforms which have characterised His Majesty's reign have been greatly facilitated by the cordial approval and the active encouragement of this most democratic of oriental despots. The youngest of the Great Powers has become a factor to be reckoned with all over the world during the reign of Mutsuhito, and the most captious of critics must admit that such a result would have been impossible had the late Emperor opposed instead of aided the movement. The nation mourns an enlightened, broad-minded, honorable, unselfish and patriotic monarch.

Practical Temperance Reform.

The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, inspired by the disaster at Corning, N.Y., has adopted a rule forbidding all employees connected with the operation of its trains from using intoxicants either while on or while off duty. Further, all classes of employees directly connected with the movement of trains, according to another new rule, are prohibited from using their time while off duty in a manner that may unfit them for the safe, prompt, and efficient performance of their duties. This rule applies particularly to men who might spend their time playing poker or other card games. The management, in formulating this rule, came to the conclusion that there were many forms of dissipation besides drinking that might unfit men for duty.

The prohibitions are excellent and fully justified by the exigencies of public safety. There is, however one form of dissipation which is apt to unfit train hands for the safe, prompt and efficient performance of their duties, and which should be just as sternly prohibited. That is the practice of working unreasonably long hours. We frequently hear of engine drivers working until through sheer exhaustion, they fall asleep on their engines.

Montreal Accepts Temporary Loan.

The Montreal City Council has accepted from the Bank of Montreal a temporary loan of £750,000 (\$3,500,000) on Treasury bills, for six months, at 4½ per cent., or with commission and stamp duties 4½%. Besides the £750,000

loan the Council passed by-laws giving the city authority to borrow sums of \$248,646 and \$5,214,000 for public works. The first sum is the balance of the amount which the city was entitled to borrow on the strength of last year's assessment. The second represents the 12 per cent. calculated on the net increase of \$43,450,000 for this year.

The financial statement of the city reads as follows:

In conformity with section 343 of the Charter (amended in 1912).

Value of assessable real estate, less probable reductions:

According to roll of 1911.....	\$318,000,000.00
According to roll of 1910.....	\$319,550,000.00
Increase.....	\$ 61,450,000.00
Less—	
Value of the properties of the Harbor Commissioners assessed for the first time in the roll of 1911, provisionally reduced pending the decision of the Court about.....	\$ 18,000,000.00
Net increase.....	\$ 43,450,000.00

Borrowing power of, at 12 per cent. \$ 5,214,000.00

European Municipal Administration.

Mr. Henry Bruere, a director of the Bureau of Municipal Research with four members of the staff sailed this week for Germany. Their mission is to study the working of municipal administration in seven or eight of the principal German cities beginning at Frankfurt, which has the reputation of being one of the best-governed cities in Germany, and it is there that Bruere and his associates expect to find methods of municipal administration which can be applied to American cities. Particular attention will be given to finance, budget-making, public works, and civil-service activities. German officials have given assurance of co-operation. In Frankfurt, the city departments were thrown open to the inquiries by formal action of the magistrate. The investigation, will extend over a period of six months.

The idea is one that might well be adopted by Montreal. Major George Washington Stephens has shown what can be done on these lines in one branch of investigation, that is to say harbour construction and administration. It is really astonishing that so little has been done by Canadian and American cities in the way of systematic investigation of European methods of municipal administration. We do not even pretend that we have nothing to learn from the old world in these matters. We freely admit that many civic departments are better managed in London, Glasgow, Paris, or Berlin. But so far as actual investigation is concerned it has never gone beyond the limits of an aldermanic jaunt, by which little or nothing has been learned. The work requires to be energetically and systematically done by competent observers, such as we imagine are Mr. Bruere and his assistants. In all Germany and in all Europe they will fail to find anything so monstrous as the New York police administration, but they may find out, how Europe manages to be free from such evils. We do not say that the European cities have nothing to learn from this continent, but it is safe betting that they know more about our methods than we know about theirs.