

## The Cement Merger

"A measure will be submitted to you for the purpose of rendering more effective the present legislation respecting combinations which unduly enhance prices."

The above paragraph appears in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Dominion Parliament, following the agitation commenced by the Union of Canadian Municipalities to protect the municipalities against any unfair action by the recently formed Cement Merger. It shows that the Union has not been in vain, taking the lead in legislation which is for the betterment of the citizens generally. A compliment once paid by a Provincial Premier to the Union was that all it ever advocated was the good of the people, without the shadow of an axe to grind.

The paragraph quoted above means that the Government is prepared to protect the people against unjust prices which are possible because a Merger has virtually eliminated all competition, and the manufacturer can charge what he likes, because of our system of Protection against foreign manufacturers.

The present Government has, very wisely, made no abrupt break in the protective system inaugurated by the National Policy of its predecessors, both because of existing revenue, and because without it the manufacturing industries of Canada would have been swept away by the dumping competition of our neighbours to the south. But the protection must be reasonable, and when combinations only result in heavy rises of prices to the public, immense issues of watered stock, undue profits to the makers, and the ruin of competitors, then it is time for the Government to step in and protect the consumer. And this the Government is evidently prepared to do.

The policy is a good one, for no one would like to see the Dominion, its Parliaments, Press and Judiciary dominated by Mergers, and the general public bled white as those across the boundary are to-day.

Canada is on the eve of just the same tremendous development as was seen in the States after the war. There it was exploited by far seeing men, who took advantage of it to concentrate commercial power in few hands, take immense rake-offs for watered stock, and form trusts that have been a curse to the country. We do not want any copy of the Standard Oil Company in Canada. We must take warning in time. We have recently seen the price of rubber shoes forced up to \$1.25 a pair which could be bought within five years for sixty cents.

Let it be distinctly understood that neither the Union of Canadian Municipalities, nor this Journal, stands against capital. But a fair deal for the public good requires Public Control; and this is an absolute necessity if the people are to receive the justice to which they are entitled.

The municipalities are showing, by numerous resolutions of Councils received from everywhere throughout the country, that they intend to permit no trifling with their interests in the matter of cement, and their stand is indicative of the temper of our population on the whole merger question.

The people of Canada are by no means helpless.

## A Subway in Toronto

The congestion of traffic downtown in Toronto has raised the question of constructing an underground railway, and the matter has been brought before the Council by Controller Hocken. After a full discussion, it has been decided to submit the general question to the ratepayers for their decision. The plan outlined is to undertake a system of underground car lines for 2¾ miles, and surface line for 18 miles, at an estimated cost of \$4,885,000. The underground lines will be on Front St., from the St. Lawrence Market to the Union Station; along Yonge St. from Front St. to St. Clair St., and along Bloor St., East from Yonge to the corner of Broadview and Danforth avenues. From the end of the underground sections, the surface lines would be continued.

The estimated receipts would more than provide for the expenses and interest, so that its construction would not add to the City's expenses. Controller Hocken argues that this will solve the question of communication between the outlying parts and the centre of the city, and not interfere with the street Railway.

## The First Steamer in Canada

One hundred years ago on the first of this month, the first steamboat in Canadian waters took her maiden voyage. This was the "Accommodation", built by Mr. John Molson, of Montreal, to ply between that city and Quebec; she was 25 feet long, and could accommodate 20 passengers, but only ten heroes were found willing to embark in the first trip. The fare from Montreal to Quebec was £2,10s., meals included, but from Quebec to Montreal it was £3. The trip down took 48 hours, but up took a good deal more. The venture by Mr. Molson followed that of Fulton, on the Hudson, but Fulton copied the earlier steamboat of Symington, built and operated in Scotland, and also bought his engines in England, while Mr. Molson had his steamer and engines built in Canada.

## Aid from Municipalities

In recent bulletin of the Department of Agriculture of Saskatchewan, Mr. Hedley Auld, the chief of the Bureau, calls attention to the difficulty of distributing the farm laborers in harvest time where they are most needed, and makes the following valuable suggestion. That the various rural municipalities should instruct their secretaries to keep a register for the use of the farmers in making known what help they require. Then the secretary, who usually resides in the town or village on the railway, could meet the harvesters' trains, and secure the number required for his municipality. This plan would save the time of all concerned, and not occupy the secretary for very long.

## Street Cars St. Lawrence

On Thanksgiving Day, the first Electric Car crossed the St. Lawrence River, over the Victoria Jubilee Bridge at Montreal. This was the inauguration of the Southern Counties Railway Co., which is controlled by the Grand Trunk, and will be utilized as an electric system for the district on the southern mainland, opposite Montreal. The charter calls for a total mileage of 360 miles.