

# The Chronicle

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**GET-RICH-QUICK PROPOSITIONS.** NEVER since the days of the Spanish Jackass Company and the Mississippi Bubble, has the dear public lacked for get-rich-quick offerings. The "new scheme to hook suckers," as a New York mining journal characterizes the recent Ely Central Copper campaign, is almost as old as the Nevada hills from which the company managed to scrape its shipment of ore.

"Always jump out of a mounted mine, unless you're at the bottom of it" is an old-time London dictum that most everyone remembers—after the bottom has fallen out. It is not apt to be heard, however, amid the din of the boomster's newspaper shoutings, and the "spelling" of his follow-up circulars. What could be more disinterested than the form letters that Eli Anybody was getting two or three weeks ago regarding Ely Central? Crop money well in hand, what more natural than to entrust some of it to the philanthropists who showed such concern in his fortunes? Wonderful people, these mail order promoters! As some one has said of this busy tribe, whose one aim in life is to make money for other people, it's amazing what lots of money they spend in postage stamps and printer's ink.

That Canada just now presents a tempting field to the alert promoter, is evident from the variety of stock offerings calculated to appeal to the "small investor." Some may be good, and others rather worse than indifferent.

**A PORT FOR A NATION.** IT is a thoroughly practical—and practicable—plan upon which the Montreal Harbour Commissioners propose to expend \$1,500,000 a year for twelve years. Its benefits to Canada as a whole, rather than to Montreal, are the grounds upon which government backing is being asked.

As outlined by the president of the board, Major G. W. Stephens, the scheme approved by a committee of eight distinguished engineers includes the doubling of the port's present capacity; the lessening of St. Mary's current so that water portage will take the place of land cartage; the creating of manufacturing and warehouse sites with unexcelled railway and water access; the securing of low-priced power

for the movement of harbour equipment and grain elevators; and a substantial reduction of handling charges on all freight.

"When completed," said Major Stephens, the other day before the Canadian Club, "Canada will possess a national port, created at a less capital cost than any of her rivals, and having advantages not to be found in any other port in North America."

**MERGERS — MERGER** after merger "of AND MERGERS. ister" came with the expanding industrial prosperity of the United States a decade ago. Before long it looked as though but little would remain for further consolidation. But now it appears as though the work had been but half done; and mergers of mergers, with billion-dollar capitalization, are being planned in the year of recovery, 1909. Last week, it was a Copper Trust that aroused interest, this week a Telegraph and Telephone Merger of unexampled proportions.

Consolidation does not in itself afford any guarantee of success. Mergers, like smaller corporations, are amenable to economic laws, and dependent upon efficiency of management. Some, like the International Harvester Company, were brought about by conservative promotions. In that case, the value of the economics of combination were apparent, and the majority of shareholders were content to retain their interest; the capitalization was moderate, and the underwriters' commissions were in marked contrast to the "rake-offs" obtained from certain other flotations. Other mergers, like United States Steel, started with "too large a dram in the stomach" of speculative capitalization. This they have since been able to work off—but there were some gloomy enough "mornings after," following the set-back of 1903. Others again, like the Tammany-sired Asphalt Trust, were "born to bleat prostrate like sheep on their backs in a ditch."

It behooves Canada to guard against the excesses that marked the United States trust movement of ten years ago. Along with mergers that are in accord with the logic of the situation, others are apt to be projected that have no industrial "raison d'être."