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The last annual report of the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal contains some valuable information as to the progress of harbour improvement and other matters of public interest. The year 1889 is memorable for the assumption by the Department of Public Works of the control and management of the Ship Channel works. The proceedings in connection with that important change were fully reported and illustrated in this journal. An account of the progress made during the year is contained in the published report of the Department. The engineering branch has been engaged principally on the construction of the new wharves at Hochelaga and Maisonneuve. The operations are so far advanced that it is expected that some 1,300 feet frontage will be available during the coming summer. By the fall, the Harbour Master thinks, the St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery Company will be able to discharge vessels opposite their Refinery. The wharves in the harbour underwent important repairs, and part of the roadway opposite the C.P.R. and G.T.R. offices has been planked—a work which it is proposed to extend. The number of sea-going vessels that arrived in port last season was 695, of an aggregate tonnage of 823,265, of which 49,538 tons passed into the canal. This is an increase of 40 vessels and 40,692 tons compared with the previous year. Of these vessels 526 (767,654 tons) were of iron; 169 (55,511 tons) of wood. The inland vessels arriving numbered 5,847, aggregating 1,069,709 tons—an increase of 347 vessels and 209,695 tons. The total of vessels of all classes was 6,542, with a tonnage of 1,892,876—an increase in tonnage of 247,387. The nationalities of the sea-going vessels were as follows:—British, 641 (tonnage, 766,322); Norwegian, 26; German, 16; French, 8; Spanish, 2; and Russian, 2. Owing to the death of Andrew Robertson, Esq., whose portrait was published last year in this journal, it was necessary to appoint a new member in his place. Richard White, Esq., was nominated to the vacancy, the appointment giving general satisfaction. The Board, as at present constituted, consists of Henry Bulmer, Esq., chairman; His Worship, Jacques Grenier, Mayor; the Hon. Edward Murphy, Hugh McLennan, Victor Hudon, Charles H. Gould, J. O. Villeneuve, Andrew Allan and Richard White, Esquires, Commissioners; Mr. Alexander Robertson, Secretary; John Kennedy, M. Inst. C.E., Chief Engineer; Captain Thomas Howard, Harbour Master; Capt. Louis St. Louis, Deputy Harbour Master; John Ferns, Wharfinger and Paymaster.

As usually happens when a great disaster takes a community by surprise, the daily press abounds in excellent advice as to the necessity of more effectual precaution against fire. The danger lies, to a considerable extent, in the failure of critics and theorists to apply the lesson to themselves. After every such catastrophe there is intense anxiety to discover the source of the mischief and to show how it might have been avoided. That task accomplished more or less satisfactorily, the agitation gradually subsides, and other topics occupy the public mind. In far too many instances, no appreciable reform in appliances or methods follows the discussion, and, after a certain interval, we are horrified by another calamity, due, perhaps, to the very same causes that produced the last. Every city in Canada has had repeated warning of the jeopardy to which life and property are constantly exposed from defective construction with inflammable materials and inadequate provision for the extinction of fire and the saving of life. A contemporary proposes that this department of civic administration should be entrusted to a body of experts—experts in architecture, in sanitation and in the prevention and extinction of fires. A thoroughly qualified and authorized council of that kind would be invaluable to a city.

The illustrations of the work done by the pupils of the schools of the Council of Arts and Manufactures, which we published in last week's issue, have attracted considerable attention. It was a revelation to many by no means unintelligent or unenlightened citizens of Montreal to learn that these schools had produced such striking results. In the address delivered last year by Mr. S. E. Dawson, as president of the Council, from which we have already quoted, surprise was expressed that so little was known of an enterprise which had been successfully conducted for so many years. A year ago, at the time of the exhibition in the old St. Gabriel Church, we ventured to say that the fault for this ignorance did not lie altogether with the public. The comments which we have heard and read since the character of the pupils' handicraft was made known by our engravings, has not led us to other conclusions. In these days those who hide their light under a bushel must resign themselves to the fate which, on the best authority, is reserved for such martyrs to their own modesty. Now that the Council has learned the saner way, we trust that others will follow the good example.

How far governments should undertake the rôle of Mæcenas is a question that is not now discussed for the first time. From China to Peru, and from remote ages to the present day, instances might be cited of the benefits conferred on learning and culture by timely help from "the powers that be." On the other hand that genius in shackles to the foot of the throne, however the pain or the shame of its thralldom may be soothed, can yield at best but the song of the captive, has been long since admitted. Even the Augustan age, so often held up to admiration for its rich Horatian and Virgilian harvest, has been found by some inquirers to be an argument for freedom with poverty rather than for constraint with competence or even wealth—though, probably, as things were, sudden silence was the sole alternative to that prolonged music which still delights us. Certainly for literature the age of patronage is past, any survivals of it in England being, like Col. Lowther's protégé, the poet Close, too contemptible for vigor-

ous contempt. There is, however, no reason in the world why the State should not encourage works of native production—especially works which worthily set forth the resources of the country and are calculated to add to its prestige, its population and its general development. Works of this nature, whatever form they take, are contributions to the public service, and, as such, are entitled to assistance.

The Romans, being a practical people, encouraged the growth of population and the settlement of their waste lands. It was possibly to promote this last end that Virgil was induced to write his *Georgics*—a poem which still adds dignity to the farmer's toil. A law endowed the father of three children with certain important privileges and some substantial advantages. The Hon. Colonel Rhodes had, therefore, some precedent for his gift of a hundred acres to the sturdy parent of a dozen children. Did the good Commissioner know to what extent the patriotic exercise of that long and mongrel named bump would necessitate the granting away of the Crown Lands of the province? Certainly the patriarchal aptitude for having sons and daughters is evinced in a surprising manner by the published list of claimants. No less than 547 fathers and mothers (widows) of twelve children have applied for the reward of well-doing. An analysis of the list reveals a fair proportion of English, Irish and Scotch names amid the French majority.

A writer in the *North-West Magazine*, published at St. Paul, Minnesota, contrasts the farm buildings in the Dakotas with those of Manitoba to the advantage of the latter. He also gives the Canadian side the credit of a better class of settlers, many of whom brought enough money with them to make good improvements on their claims. The Province, he adds, is entering on a new career of prosperity, largely due to the extension of the railways. The progress during the past year is said to have been more substantial than that of the five years preceding. The visitor was greatly impressed with the extent of the fertile land in the Province—an "immense prairie region, where soil and climate are singularly favourable to the production of wheat."

We have already referred more than once to the efforts that have been made to improve the breed of our Canadian horses. In connection with those efforts, the *Haras National*, established at Outremont by a company, of which the Hon. Louis Beaubien is president, has attracted especial attention. Mr. Beaubien was aided in his undertaking by the Comte de Mandat-Grancy, a French nobleman, as accomplished as he is practical, who has done much to raise the standard of horses in France. The Haras (a word which means a stud, and with this significance was Latinized into *Haracia* in the Middle Ages), is a well known and successful institution in Europe. Not long since we quoted a strong recommendation of the system from the High Commissioner's Report, from which it appears that it is growing in favour in England as well as across the Channel. It is more interesting to us, however, to know that it has made good its footing on our own soil. Last Saturday (May 10) the *Haras National* was formally opened in the presence of a distinguished company of invited guests, the Governor-General and suite having come from Ottawa expressly to take part in the inauguration. A parade of horses indicated satisfactorily what the Haras aimed at achieving—same really fine animals being on the ground. At