

dence to public officials and business men of the town, and the result would have been disastrous politically as well as financially. So the city took the matter up and is now practically the owner of the canal.

The cost of the enterprise has been, in round numbers, fifty million dollars—a pretty good load for a single city to carry in one department. From the Mersey the canal has followed in the main the line of the river Irwell. The cost of the excavation has been enormous, because of unexpected features in the soil, causing banks to give way, etc. An immense amount of rock masonry has been required on this account. Nor has the cost been in money alone; for the construction of the canal has been attended by a number of serious accidents. At one of these 25 men were killed and 40 injured, some of them for life, by a couple of railway cars going over an embankment upon a force of workmen engaged in the excavation below.

Judging by the persistency which attended the construction of the canal, it will not be the fault of the people of Manchester if its operation does not prove a success. At the outset they have a very serious opposition on the part of railways. The canal managers announced a toll for vessels from Liverpool to Manchester that was less than the cost of hauling freight by rail between the two cities. The three great railway systems that unite Manchester and Liverpool and extend throughout the country—the London and North-western, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the Midland or Cheshire lines—immediately responded by making Liverpool and Manchester "common points." By this arrangement freight will be transported by rail between all sections of Great Britain and Manchester or Liverpool at the same rate, thus discriminating in favor of the latter port, unless the tolls on the canal should be abrogated entirely.

Manchester and its suburbs have, however, a great trade themselves, and it may be that they will be able to wage a successful contest with the railways until the latter are willing to enter an amicable arrangement. The immediate effects of such a contest are, even to the people of Manchester themselves, problematic, though the people seem confident that in the canal will be able to meet operating expenses, and ultimately to become a dividend paying institution. The canal will accommodate the great majority of the ocean freight traffic, and some of the smaller passenger steamers; but it will not admit such vessels as the Teutonic, Etruria, Paris and Campania, which draw more than thirty feet of water, while the canal is but twenty-six feet deep. There also will be considerable local passenger travel, as the trip on a small steamer can be made in four or five hours, the large freight vessels taking double that time.

A BAD RAILROAD YEAR.

Railway receiverships and foreclosures in 1893 is the subject of an article in the *Railway Age* and *Northwestern Railroader* of December 15, in which some startling facts and

figures appear. About 13 per cent, it seems, of the entire railway mileage of the country has gone into the hands of receivers during the year; seventy-one roads, with nearly 23,000 miles of line and representing the enormous sum of \$1,288,000,000 of stocks and bonds, have failed. And this does not include failures during the latter part of the month, among which are the Atchafalaya, Topeka & Santa Fe, and the New York & New England, with their vast liabilities. The loss caused by the failure of such large concerns is exceedingly deplorable, reaching as it does not only stockholders and bondholders, but the vast army of employees whose wages are considerably reduced.

The *Railway Age* says that in ten years 306 railway corporations have become insolvent; and it then makes the following remark: "It is evident that the process of insolvency is moving rapidly on toward the point of involving our entire railway system. There must be an entire change in the attitude of the public and the laws toward capital invested in railways, or the ruin which these figures picture will become general."

It is impossible to ascribe this state of affairs to hard times alone, after the publication of the alleged maneuvers of the managers of the Northern Pacific and some other roads. Abuse of public confidence by leading officials and extravagance in the management are probably real causes of the disasters referred to. Railway communication in the United States, with the vast inland distances, is vital to the existence of the country in its present state of high development. It can no more cease, without disastrous results to the country, than can the circulation of blood in the human body without suspending the functions of the various organs. Life requires a never-ceasing pulsation, and the progress of this country depends on a steadily growing net of railways, carrying the products of farmers, miners, stock and sheep-owners and manufacturers, with safety, regularity and cheapness from one place to another. If, therefore, it should be found that this vital interest to the country cannot safely be trusted to individuals, the time may arrive when the demand shall become general upon the government to take the management of at least the principal roads in its strong hands. This is a proposition which has already found warm advocates; it is also one whose opponents, under such circumstances as we have cited, will find their task of defeating it ever and ever more difficult.

SPARE THE TREES, PLANT NEW ONES!

In another column of this issue Prof. C. A. Whitling of the University of Utah undertakes a calm and interesting discussion of our native forests in Utah, and points out the duty of our people with reference to the important forestry question as it applies directly to us. With the gentleman's argument, conclusions and suggestions the *NEWS* is in full and hearty accord. He sounds none too soon a note of warning which every consideration requires us to heed. The conditions

which he depicts are so familiar and obvious that no one will be found to dispute them. His advice as to the preservation of the remnants of our meager forests, the planting of trees, the organization of a Forestry Association—all this is sound, timely and in the highest degree necessary. We bespeak for the article the thoughtful perusal of every reader, and for its concluding suggestions the active interest and quick acceptance of the leading men in every county of the Territory.

On more than one occasion recently the *NEWS* has commented on the importance of the subject of tree culture, in its relations to the health and prosperity of the country; criticizing, also, the reckless and seemingly uncontrolled destruction of the native forests. The matter is at last in a fair way to receive more effective governmental notice than has heretofore been accorded it, though efforts of a more or less desultory character have not been wanting in the past to impose restrictions on tree-slaughtering and extend encouragement to tree-planting. In his recent report the U. S. secretary of the interior gave the important subject extensive mention, and so also did the President in his regular message to Congress. We trust that nothing but a hint will now be necessary to arouse the people of Utah to their duty in the premises, and that they will at once arrange to move out on the lines of intelligence toward the prevention of further spoliation and the cure of the evils already wrought.

FATAL NEGLIGENCE.

We have already commented upon the immense financial losses sustained by the railroad corporations and their employees during the fatal year just closed. In the great railroad business of the country there are, however, other elements that have interest for the public than the mere knowledge of how much or how little the various lines pay their capitalist stockholders or their laborers on train or track. One of these elements is the cause and extent of fatalities to rolling stock, employees and patrons—statistics of which are furnished from time to time, usually with some reluctance on the part of the roads, and invariably with a certain shock to the sensibilities on the part of those who patronize and ride upon them. When we are told, for instance, that at least one hundred persons lost their lives through railway accidents during August, September and October, on their way to the World's Fair and homeward, most of us become so worked up that we are tempted to agree with the *Railroad Gazette* in branding the ghastly fact as a "national humiliation." And when these and similar figures are continually thrust before us, and we wait in vain for the railroads to give a satisfactory explanation of them, we are very ready to agree, whether justly or not, with the writer in last month's *North American Review*, who attributes this fearful sacrifice of human life to "negligence in operation." This latter writer, Mr. Prout, makes a comparative study of casualties in this and the mother country, and his conclusions are that traveling by rail is at least five