

A FRENCH SHIP CANAL.

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Paris, March 15.

The Parliamentary Committee on Maritime Affairs, to which the Chamber of Deputies referred the bill for the proposed ship canal across Southwestern France from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, has concluded its labors, and the chairman of the committee, M. Honoré Leygues, has submitted to the Chamber a solid, voluminous report, bristling with figures, statistics, maps, plans and projections, urging the immediate construction of the canal for strategic as well as for commercial reasons.

Strategically, the canal would destroy the importance of Gibraltar, and enable the French Mediterranean and Channel fleets to concentrate at will at either terminus of the canal. The terminal points recommended are Arcachon, on the Atlantic seaboard, and Narbonne, in the Mediterranean. Arcachon and Narbonne are to be transformed into strongly fortified naval ports, with arsenals and dockyards. Each port is to be large enough to accommodate the whole French fleet.

The canal is to be 280 miles long. The total cost is estimated at \$243,000,000, exclusive of canal constructions and fortifications, or \$205,000,000, if the twenty-seven locks are to be fitted with Archimedes elevators of the type adopted at Henschberg, which enable vessels of one thousand tons to be lifted to a height of fifty feet. The estimate of the expense of construction is based upon the cost of the Manchester Canal, and the Kiel Canal, with allowances for greater number of locks, greater depth, greater width and greater volume of water.

It is found that the tonnage of vessels that passed through the Straits of Gibraltar bound for ports in Northwestern Europe or in the Mediterranean, or vice versa, during the year 1900 amounted to fifty million tons. The local coasting traffic is put at six million tons. The committee, in order not to appear too optimistic, has taken for its estimate half of these figures. This gives a minimum traffic for the canal of twenty-eight million tons. The committee proposes to fix the canal tolls at the uniform rate of 35 cents a ton. The annual receipts from this source would be \$9,800,000. The cost of maintenance of the canal is estimated at \$2,000,000 a year. The surplus receipts, amounting to \$7,800,000, are to be applied to the payment of interest on capital at the rate of 3 per cent. The report contains elaborate statistics showing the saving in time, money and distance effected by the use of the canal. The following table gives the distances in nautical miles between Havre and Liverpool, and the principal ports of the Mediterranean by way of Gibraltar and by way of the proposed canal:

Table with 4 columns: Destination, From Havre, From Liverpool, and From the Canal. Rows include Barcelona, Marseilles, Algiers, Tunis, Naples, and Palermo.

The voyage through the proposed canal would be of the least advantage is that from Hamburg to Port Said, although even in this instance there is a saving of 20 per cent gained by passing through the canal. The waterway is to be so constructed that a speed of ten knots an hour can be maintained in the canal. It is calculated that the maximum delay at each of the twenty-six locks will be twenty-seven minutes, or for the whole transit 11 hours 42 minutes. A vessel steaming at the rate of eight knots an hour would pass through the canal, including the 11 hours 42 minutes delay at the locks, in 42 hours 6 minutes. The minimum cost of coal for a vessel proceeding at eight knots an hour is calculated at 15 cents a ton per day. That is to say, a vessel of 3,000 tons proceeding at eight knots would consume \$1,131 worth of coal during a voyage of 2 days 15 hours, which is the minimum time saved during the route between the two ports—Hamburg and Port Said.

The conclusions of the report are that all vessels plying between the Mediterranean and ports of Northwestern Europe—and the tonnage of steamers passing to and from these points during the year 1900 amounted to 50,000,000 tons—will find it advantageous to make use of the proposed ship canal.

Admiral Fournier, one of the highest naval authorities in France, has drawn up an elaborate report on the proposed canal judged from a strategic point of view. In this report Admiral Fournier cites from a speech made in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Dilke the following passage: "In the event of a great war the whole of Africa, including Egypt and Algeria, would fall to the power that has command of the sea." Admiral Fournier explains and develops this text; he also refers to conclusions drawn from Captain Mahan's work on "The Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire," and shows how the French fleet is practically cut in twain by the strategic predominance of Gibraltar, which enables England, in case of war, to pen up half of the French fleet in the Mediterranean and attack the other half with overwhelming force in the Channel. Admiral Fournier has come forth as the naval champion of the proposed ship canal, which he declares to be a military necessity for France. M. Leygues, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Maritime Affairs, has announced his intention of asking the Chamber of Deputies to vote on the Ship Canal bill to be passed before the end of April. The Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry indorses the scheme, which is regarded in financial quarters with great favor, and has not the least merit of which is that the three hundred million dollars required for the construction of the much needed ship canal will all be expended in France.

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THE DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN—THE EASTER BONNET.

Weather permitting, it will appear to-morrow.

HER WOE, NO EASTER BONNET. JERSEY WOMAN WANTS HUSBAND ARRESTED BECAUSE HE WON'T BUY HER ONE.

Despite fire, flood, murder, sudden death and the certainty that the song of the mosquito will soon drive rheumatism and sleep away, Jersey still takes confidence in merriment, including therein Easter bonnets. A Hoboken woman applied for the arrest of her husband yesterday, because he refused to give her the price of one.

The Wiesners have been married a year. He, she says, gets \$8 a week. She, she says, gets what she left after the living expenses have been deducted. He, she says, considers the service efficient for her clothes, spending money and carriage hire. She, she says, is too extravagant when she wants \$4.99 for a pink Easter bonnet, trimmed with a horticultural fair. He says and she says that what the other says is not included in any marriage contract.

Said she, when the authority to whom she applied for her husband's arrest refused to order the same: "It is easy enough to see that you possess none of the feelings of a man who perfectly understands a woman."

Said he: "There's a standing reward in every State in the Union for a man who does his duty." Said she, gliding over the interruption without a quiver: "Is not an Easter bonnet at least once a year a necessity? I claim that it is, and one of the greatest necessities of a woman's life. A man who cannot furnish his wife with an Easter bonnet at least once a year is not a man."

"How can he furnish an Easter bonnet more than once a year?" he asked. "Yes, my husband gets \$8 a week, and our expenses are not very great. When he has a few dollars he buys me a bonnet for presents. Now, when Easter is at hand, he says he has not a cent. He tells me that work is slack and that he does not get his full pay every week. But I don't believe him. I think he is saving up for Christmas again."

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OVER SEAS WITHOUT WIRE.

Weather permitting, it will appear to-morrow.

MARCONI THINKS MESSAGES CAN BE SENT TO ENGLAND FOR FIVE CENTS A WORD THEN.

William Marconi is done with experiments till June. He says that he is going to try to find a ship without any wireless instruments to go home on. And not only will he do so telegraphically on his trip to Europe, but he will do none on his return to this side last of May. "The next transatlantic messages that I send will be from shore to shore, from England to Cape Breton," he said last night. "By the first of June The Tribune can send messages to England at five cents a word, after it has got the messages to Cape Breton by wire."

As soon as the Cape Breton station is working the Cape Cod station will be put in business shape, Marconi says. He does not expect or desire to make any agreement as to rates with the United States Government. "I am charged 25 cents a word in this country, if I desire, and think I can get it," he declared. "What I will charge I do not know yet."

The Marconi company is in communication with the United States Signal Service, and hopes to get the contract to furnish the apparatus for the wireless station soon to be built in Alaska. I don't know much about the American firms that are building wireless instruments, and may bid for the contract," he said. "But we suspect that they are using an infringement on my instruments, and if the United States Government adopts their apparatus it may have a lawsuit on its hands."

GRIGGS, OF GEORGIA, CHAIRMAN.

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EXCITING INCIDENTS AT A FIRE.

TO AVERT WORSE COLLISION SEARCH-LIGHT ENGINE HORSES ARE RUN INTO A WINDOW.

Several thousand people stood in Mulberry Bend Park for nearly an hour last night to watch a fire that partly destroyed the factory building at Nos. 54, 56 and 58 Baxter-st., fronting on the park. Five thousand dollars' damage was done by flames, but the fire was extinguished by the fire department.

The fire broke out at 10:30 p. m. in the building, which was used for the storage of raw cotton. The fire was caused by a gas leak in the boiler room. The fire spread rapidly, and the fire department was called at 11:15 p. m.

The fire department arrived at 11:30 p. m. and worked for nearly an hour to extinguish the fire. The fire was completely out by 12:30 a. m. The damage done by the fire was estimated at five thousand dollars.

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