

ARMIES IN CLOUDLAND.

How France and Italy Might Struggle for the Alps.

France Outdone by the Italians in Strength of Its Mountain Climbing Corps.

The Alps have been the scene of a good many tough scrimmages first and last— Hannibal with the Romans, Cesar with the Helvetii, Lombards and Piedmontese, Napoleon, the Germans, the French, the Austrians in recent years.

If the expected war breaks out again in Europe, the Alps will be again the scene of fierce fighting. They couldn't help it, peacefully disposed as they may be. Counting the Tyrol as a part of the great Alpine range, four of the great powers of Europe border on the white-capped, gigantic hills, not counting Switzerland, whose nominal neutrality would not be respected for a moment by any of the other powers if any advantage could be expected by breaking it.

France and Italy hate each other almost as bitterly as France and Prussia. Here, then, are the materials of a four-cornered combat such as the world has not seen, among the heaven kissing hills, with Russia tugging at Germany's coat tails on the east.

Both France and Italy, on whom the stress of Alpine warfare would fall most heavily, have made great preparations for it.

Italy's northwestern frontier stretches along the northwest of France for a distance of nearly 200 miles, and is separated from the German Empire by Swiss territory, with an aggregate frontier line of 130 miles. After the peace of Villafranca and the cession of the upper portion of Savoy and Nice to France, the frontier line was considerably altered to the disadvantage of Italy, since all the passes with the exception only of the minor St. Bernard, are now in French possession, or, at least, within reach of the artillery of their numerous frontier fortifications.

The systems may be grouped in the following districts:

1. The upper portion of Savoy.
2. The river region of the Isere.
3. The river region of the Durance.
4. The Maritime Alps.

The first, although belonging to France since 1860, is by virtue of former treaties (1816), considered as neutral territory, where the French are not entitled to build any fortifications, and the right of occupation in case of war belongs to Switzerland.

The Isere district is reached by the main road across the lesser St. Bernard Pass, and is commanded on the Italian side by Fort Baid. A second equally convenient road leads from the Maurienne Valley over Mont Cenis, near Susa, in the valley of the Dora Riparia. A third road leads from the Romanche Valley over the Col de Sauteret, and that of Genevre into the valley of Dora Riparia, entering the latter at Cesana. They are connected by several minor roads. On the French side a mountainous region of about twenty kilometres in width lies between the two roads, being in its turn traversed by the Galibier road.

Important fortifications are being erected on the road from Susa to Turin, besides those at Exilles and on Mont Cenis. On the other side of the frontier the French have recently strengthened the old Piedmontese fortress of Esaillon close to the mouth of the Mont Cenis tunnel and Modane. They have also built a new block house on Mont Telegraphe, commanding the road, railway and mouth of the tunnel. The third road is blocked at the narrowest point of the deep Chisone Valley by the strongly fortified town of Fenestrelle.

The most northerly road through the Durance district leads from the valley over Mont Genevre, and past Cesana, into the Chisone Valley, and at the height of the latter pass joins the southernmost road from the Isere region, the two running thence along the French border about sixty kilometres apart. The outlying works of Briancon extend for over twelve kilometres, commanding the pass over Mont Genevre, the mouth of the tunnel on the Italian side, and stretching far into the Alpine region to the north and south. As all the neighboring roads lead to this point, both offensive and defensive operations on the Alpine frontier would probably centre in this region. Eighty kilometres behind Briancon, close to the junction of the Romanche and the Isere, Grenoble forms the great bulwark of the Alpine district—the base of the second line of defense in the south, matching Chambéry and Albertville in the north.

A second road leads from Cuneo through Barcelonnette and the Col de l'Arche to the Durance Valley, and eventually unites with the northern road previously mentioned. In the Stura Valley this road is barricaded on the Italian side by Fort Vinadio, and on the French side by the fortifications of Tournoux above Barcelonnette and Fort Vincent below. Further south and southwest Siatron and the forts of Colmars and Entrevaux, in the respective valleys of the Durance, the Verdon and the Var, guard the neighboring roads. In the event of an Italian invasion the intersecting roads would be of the greatest importance. Between the Col de l'Arche and the Col di Tenda, the Alpine frontier is only crossed by small paths, protected by fortifications on the plateau of Antion and some isolated outworks pushed forward from Nice. The road over the Col di Tenda on reaching the French frontier is not more than fifteen miles distant from the route over the Col de l'Arche, which it finally joins at San Dalmazzo, in the Stura Valley. Nice is the mainstay of the French advanced line of defense.

Finally, in the third line of the French defense, comes the Rhone, with its right bank guarded by Lyons. Lyons is the most important defense landmark of Southern France, just as Toulon is the bulwark against the enemy in the Mediterranean. Of late years the city has been strengthened by a further girdle of forts—sixty kilometres—and prepared for a garrison of 60,000 men.

A comparison of the French with the Italian frontier fortifications shows Italy much the superior. Anxious for the safety of her frontier provinces, in 1872 Italy organized an Alpine Jager Corps, recruited from the ranks of the Bersaglieri regiments, the corps are kept constantly on the move about the Alpine region and the neighborhood. They are quartered exclusively on the French and Austrian frontiers, and in war times would be entrusted entirely with the defense of this region.

In the event of war Italy could place in the first line seven strong brigades, with forty-four battalions, of four or five companies—altogether 125 companies of Alpine Jagers, with 18 batteries of mountain artillery, or 36,000 men, with 108 guns. They are so distributed throughout the frontier provinces that they could be concentrated on the frontier by at least the sixth day of mobilization, after a declaration of war, thanks to the admirable network of railways in Lombardy.

Behind the Alpine troops are stationed the following forces: The whole of the First Corps is quartered in the provinces of Turin and Novara; the second Corps in Cuneo and Alessandria; and Fourth in Porto Maurizio, Signora and Piacenza. Of the remaining corps, besides one at the quarters of the head staff, the Third is at Milan, the Fifth in Verona, the Sixth in Bologna, the Seventh in Ancona, the Eighth in Florence, the Ninth in Rome, the Tenth in Naples, the Eleventh in Bari, and the Twelfth in Palermo.

Including officers, the strength of the Italian Army may be calculated thus:

1. The standing army, with its reserves, numbers about 895,000 fighting men, of whom some 230,000 are now serving with the colors.
2. The Mobile Militia—293,000 men.
3. Territorial Militia—1,400,000 men.

Next, as to the strength and organization of the French Army on her southeastern boundary. In the fourteenth and fifteenth districts bordering the Italian frontier are stationed respectively three Regional Infantry regiments, seven battalions of the Alpine corps and two brigades of six cavalry divisions, and one Regional Infantry regiment, and five Alpine battalions. Further a regiment of mountain artillery, with six batteries, is attached to each district. The Alpine corps is a recent creation. In 1888, imitating the Italian scheme for protecting the Alpine frontier, the Alpine Jagers were formed from the foot-Jager battalions, and the mountain batteries reorganized. The Jagers consist of six companies, with their special equipment of six batteries.

Although the French Army has no chance of surprising Germany in mobilization, yet in this respect France is undoubtedly superior to Italy. On the ninth morning of the mobilization the advancing troops would be situated as follows:

1. The Fourteenth Corps from Albertville in the Isere Valley, marching across the Little St. Bernard, through the Aosta Valley, toward Ivrea and Turin.
2. The Ninth and Eighteenth Corps from Aiguebelle in the Maurienne Valley, over Mont Cenis and into the Dora Riparia Valley toward Susa and Turin.
3. The Twelfth Corps from Grenoble, in the Romanche Valley, over Mont Genevre and into the Chisone Valley toward Cesana, Fenestrelle, Pinerolo and Turin.
4. The Thirteenth Corps from Embrun, in the Durance Valley, over Mont Genevre to unite with the Twelfth Corps.
5. The Seventeenth Corps from Sisteron, through the Ubaye Valley, by Barcelonnette and the Col de l'Arche, into the Stura Valley, toward Cuneo and Turin.
6. The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Corps from Nice, across the Col di Tenda, toward Cuneo and Turin.

On these routes the marching columns one to six must cover from eighty to 140 miles before reaching the plain of the Po, near Turin. The march could not be completed before the sixteenth to the nineteenth day of mobilization. Meanwhile, the Italian Army would be assembled complete in its prearranged positions in the plain of the Po, and it might be difficult for the French columns—isolated from the Alpine valleys—to effect the intended combination.

An Italian invading army, whether it operated alone or endeavored to combine with an allied army north of the Jura, would be certain to take a northwesterly direction. The French Army would hurry to the interior to guard the capital, Paris. The principal blow must be dealt there to destroy the opponent's head source of supply. Both forces, therefore, will aim at commanding the road to Paris.

With reference to the Anglo-Italian understanding, the advantage is very evenly divided between both countries. Italy insures her coasts against a hostile landing, preserves her fleet from destruction, and has the option of keeping free the greater part of her army. England secures the valuable support of the Italian fleet for the safety of her advanced posts in the Mediterranean and her influence in the coast regions.

Three Hundred a Year.

A delightful sketch entitled "Romance in London on Three Hundred a Year," appears in the April number of the Chautauquan. The author thus describes her ingenious methods of making three hundred dollars go as far as double that sum might in less careful fingers: "The furnishing of my garret cost \$16.00, and I pay a weekly rent of 62 cents. My expenses amount to \$4.00 a week, when I am careful, and read much at home, as I am apt to do at the end of each quarter. But I am much abroad. There are hosts of free lectures and galleries, almost all exhibitions are free on certain days, and "orders" are not difficult to obtain when they are not. I frequent reading rooms where I am warmed and supplied with periodicals and newspapers, sometimes for two pennies, sometimes one, sometimes none. The two-penny ones are numerous. A favorite penny one is at Whitley's, the great cheap bazaar. A free one is the public library nearly opposite St. Martin's Church, "In the Fields" of brick and mortar. An unsurpassable one is at the People's Palace in Mile End Road. For American papers I seek the reading room of Bankers, as free to the penniless, if clean and decent, as to the millionaire. What matters it to my enjoyment of existence that I have not a second pair of shoes in the world, and that my gloves are mended? What bright is upon my fate, or my fate, that of my \$300 a year I spend more upon romance than upon pudding? "Better are dumplings than daisies," says a Chinese proverb. I am not Chinese, and I prefer daisies, though grown in a garret, or plucked by humble waysides. Had not even Lazarus joys that Dives never knew?"

Not a Millionaire.

"Want to buy some of those apples?" inquired the grocer's clerk.
"To buy some?" said the hopeless-looking man near the barrel, with a dry sob.
"No, I don't want to buy any, but if it doesn't cost too much I'd like to stand here a few moments and indulge sparingly in smelling them."

WATER AS A DEADENER OF PAIN.

As an Anesthetic It is Declared Preferable to Cocaine or Chloroform.

A discovery in the domain of anesthetics is being a good deal talked about in medical circles in Vienna, which, if it bears the severe tests which it is proposed to apply to it, will prove an inestimable boon to suffering humanity. Neither of the two agencies heretofore employed by surgeons to deaden or minimize physical pain during serious operations, chloroform and cocaine, is wholly free from danger. Chloroform cannot be administered to persons suffering from heart disease, poverty of blood, etc., and cocaine injections under the skin have more than once had exceedingly deleterious effects.

The new discovery, which is credited to Dr. K. L. Schleich, determines the fact that absolute local immunity from pain even during protracted operations, can be obtained without restoring to general narcosis of the patient, so that a sufferer may remain perfectly conscious during the amputation of his hand or foot without undergoing the tortures usually associated with such operations, or exposing himself to the danger of syncope ever present in the operating room. It appears that subcutaneous injections of a solution of salt, and even of simple cold distilled water, will produce exactly the same local anesthetic effects as cocaine.

The explanation of the phenomenon is simple. Local insensibility to pain is caused in the case of cocaine by purely chemical changes; while cold water acts mechanically—by means of high pressure and low temperature. Under the influence of the high pressure and sudden lowering of temperature the blood and lymph are driven from the region operated upon to places where the pressure is less. The tissue is thus deprived of its supply of blood and temporary paralysis of the nerves results.

It is stated on the authority of one of the first physicians of Europe that the importance of this discovery is all the more undoubted seeing that if, in a given case, cold water should fail to produce the needed degree of insensibility, a weak and absolutely harmless solution of cocaine would prove certainly efficacious.

The Worship of Fashion.

In nearly every reference to the servile worship of fashion it is taken for granted that woman is the worshipper. But this assumption does not accurately record the fact. Doubtless she is a worshipper, but in every case man will be found kneeling by her side—more than that, he is not only a worshipper of fashion on his own account but he would be a most unhappy, not to say angry, mortal if his women folk should take his cynical flings at fashion seriously, and ignore its decrees. It pleases him and does not at all offend the women to hold them up as slaves to fashion. But the cowardly fellow is himself such a cringing slave to fashion that he goes on year after year wearing costumes whose absurdity and inappropriateness in many respects he has long ago acknowledged. There is the "plug" hat, for instance. From the artistic and utilitarian point of view it is utterly indefensible. It is unsuited to the windy and stormy weather of winter and spring, and in summer it is little less than a crime. It is constructed in defiance of all hygienic principles. It is ugly too; like vice, it is a monster of a frightful mien. But like vice, also, it becomes tolerable and even beautiful in aspect by constant usage. A priori, the "plug" hat habit ought to find no followers among intelligent people who think for themselves. But as a matter of fact it does. We would not be understood as indulging in any criticism of the "plug" hat, much less as organizing a crusade against it. We have not a word of criticism for the men who wear "plug" hats; they form a large proportion of our best and most intelligent citizens. Even the man who wears a "plug" hat while riding a bicycle may, and doubtless does, adorn every station he fills. All we mean to imply in these philosophical remarks is, that in their devotion to fashion women are but imitating men. They are only acting as they know men are most desirous of having them act. We are aware that this admission may appear to be a base surrender to that claim of superiority in this matter which men always make for themselves and which some women weakly allow. We are also aware that we are taking the bread out of the mouth of numerous fellow-craftsmen who have found money and fame in jokes about women's subservience to fashion. But none of these considerations can tempt us to ignore the cold facts in this case. Taking no attitude on the great question of fashion as such, we simply remark that men who go on year after year wearing "plug" hats, merely because they are displayed in the windows of hat stores, have no right to make jokes on the coming reign of crinolines.

But weak as man is with respect to fashion, we are glad to be able to say that he is showing some disposition to let his good sense assert itself in matters of dress and adornment. Not many years ago most American men would have been ashamed to wear a boutonniere. They would have considered it a mark of effeminacy. Now it is becoming one of the most common, as it is one of the most appropriate, adornments of gentlemen, not merely on formal or festive occasions, but during business hours. In itself the wearing of a flower may seem a small thing. But it may have an unsuspected influence in the direction of manners and tastes. And if there were no other consideration it is a good thing for men, most of whose lives are immersed in the artificialities of life, thus to be brought into contact with a bit of nature, with its manifold suggestions of simplicity and beauty. Moreover, in manifold details of dress which we have not space here to enumerate men are showing a disposition to get away from the dead and colorless uniformity which has so long been the rule. It is neither possible nor desirable to go back to the picturesque styles of the last century. Such styles would be out of harmony with the spirit of this industrial age. But without any radical changes the present styles of men's dress may be, and doubtless will be, very much improved, so as to make them more beautiful as well as more convenient.

Most Likely.

A courting couple in a car: He—"Is she happy, little ootsy-wootsy?"
She—"Oh, so happy. Is topsy-wootsy happy?"
He—"Oh, so happy!"
She—"What would topsy-wootsy do if there was no ootsy-wootsy in the world?"
Gruff voice of a man in the car—"Topsy-wootsy would be hugging some other girl."

SKATING ON ARTIFICIAL ICE.

How Pleasure-Loving Parisians Have Been Enjoying Themselves all Winter.

The French, though an industrious and thrifty race, take their pleasure very earnestly, and the Parisian is the personification of gaiety. Although he is the best in summer, when the sun is always shining and he can pass his life in the open air, he is as keenly alive to the attractions of winter recreations as his Canadian brethren, and while people in other lands have been complaining of the intermittent nature of this winter's frosts he has been skating on genuine ice since Oct. 1 last. A skating rink of artificial ice has been constructed in Paris forty meters in length by eighteen in width. As described by a correspondent it consists of a cement and cork floor resting upon a perfectly tight metallic foundation upon which is arranged a series of connected iron pipes having a total length of 5,000 meters. The building is supplied with steam engines and the necessary machinery for converting the ammoniacal gas into liquid ammonia, which is led into large reservoirs or refrigerators, where it expands with the production of cold. Having returned to the gaseous state it is taken up again by the machines, which force it anew into the condensers, and so on indefinitely. The same supply of ammonia serves over and over again. The lowering of the temperature produced by the expansion is utilized for cooling an uncoagulable liquid (solution of calcium chloride) which circulates in spirals in the center of the refrigerators. This liquid, by means of a pump, is forced into the pipes in the floor of the rink. Each section derives its supply from two principal conduits, into which there is a constant flow of the chloride of calcium solution cooled to a temperature that varies according to the velocity of the circulation, which can be regulated at will. When the external temperature is not very high all that has to be done is merely to keep the ice in condition, and a few degrees below zero will suffice—while, on the contrary, when the upper stratum, or even the entire rink, has to be renewed a temperature of 15 to 20 degrees below may be needed. The surface is renewed every night. First, the snow produced by the blades of the skates is removed, and then a sheet of water is spread by means of a pump over the ice and kept in circulation during the entire period of congelation in order to give a perfectly even surface. In order to prevent the spirals from producing changes of level through the contraction due to the differences in temperature to which they are subjected they are composed of pipes that enter each other with friction to a certain length. They thus form slides that allow of a certain play. Moreover, in order that their temperature shall be as uniform as possible, care is taken to frequently change the direction of the current. In this way a uniform mean temperature in this entire circulation is secured. The hall is decorated with winter scenery and lit by electric light, and the temperature is carefully regulated and usually maintained at between 15 and 18 degrees.

The Press of Paris.

One of the most significant and one of the most melancholy features of the exposures in France of the scandalous Panama Company's affairs is the conduct of the newspapers. During the dozen years in which the millions of the shareholders and bondholders of the company have been squandered or stolen, the daily press of Paris has either been silent or has openly supported the swindlers. The support, it is now known, was simply bought, the fruit of direct and shameful bribery; and so, in part, was the silence, but not in all cases. This is not so strange. Papers have been bribed in New York by Tweed, in Philadelphia by Bardsley. But they were exposed, and in great part by other papers. Why did this not happen in Paris? The general facts were not unknown. M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, in the *Economiste Francais* week by week, for years, from the published accounts of the company, showed beyond all doubt that it was rotten, and any daily paper could have done the same. It was the will, not the way, that was wanting. In this country professional rivalry—what we know as "enterprise"—would have furnished an ample motive. Why was it so weak in the newspapers of Paris? One reason is that the French are not readers of news in the sense that Americans and Englishmen are. They seek in their journals amusement and a certain excitement, for the most part political; but the detailed reports of happenings, great and small, from any and all sources, such as our papers furnish, do not please them—would, in fact, be left unread. This has made it easier for the papers to make of financial news a matter of business wholly, very rarely discussed or reported in detail. To this add the fact that there are no journals of importance in France outside of Paris, and the "conspiracy of silence," as M. Cavaignac termed it, becomes less unaccountable.

The Lover of Freedom.

That free Republic, the United States of America, is concluding the treaty with Russia; a treaty which will deny to the Czar's enemies the refuge which monarchical England has always offered and still offers to the victims of tyranny.

The treaty, if ratified, will practically make the Czar's police as powerful in the United States as they are in Russia. The right of asylum to political offenders is safeguarded by clauses that appear to mean much and in reality mean nothing. Attempts on the life of the Czar or members of the Czar's household are specially excepted from the list of political offenses.

In a country that has no law but the will of one man murder seems to be the only available weapon of the oppressed. A dynasty that regards dissatisfaction as a crime cannot be disturbed by any argument less forcible than dynamite. It will not be to the credit of the United States if it unites with the Czar to destroy the patriots who use the tools which Russian tyranny has forced Russians to use for the good of their country.

The Absent Friend.

Old Friend—"Don't you think that Nellie Secord's son is fading a little?"
Tother Friend—"I really cannot have you abusing the absent in such fashion. I think she is wonderfully well preserved. She is at least ten years older than people think she is."

GOOD ROADS.

The Ontario Government Makes a Move in the Right Direction.

The Ontario Government deserves to be congratulated on promptly responding to the agitation for reform in road making. What the country districts need is, the placing of the entire road system under uniformity of management. Mere sporadic improvements will not meet the general necessity and demand, nor will it be possible to carry out the reforms needed if they are attempted only here and there in spots. There are appliances required which are too costly to be purchased for occasional use on short sections of road.

The plan of joint ownership of such plant by two or more municipalities or the renting it to neighbors by the owners would lead to constant friction and to neglect, as one municipality that did road work efficiently might have its efforts handicapped and thwarted by an adjoining one in which less intelligence prevailed, where mere avoidance of expense was mistaken for economy. This notion is the bane of rural municipalities, so much so, that the present wretched condition of our country roads is almost wholly attributable to false ideas as to economy.

During the last few decades there have been great extensions of railways, marked improvements in municipal buildings, country residences and farm buildings, which seem to have directed attention from the road question. Having secured probably all the railways needed for many years for shipping farm produce and bringing in farm supplies, it is high time that the roads leading to the local stations and markets be placed in better condition. The advantages of railways have not been realized by farmers to be as great as was hoped when they voted large subsidies to aid in their construction, because the roads forming a connection between them and their farms have been left unimproved.

Improvements in roads result in bringing more closely together the members of the agricultural community and thereby increase the social intercourse of farmers. This is a good point, one more important than appears on the surface. The distaste alleged to be increasing for farm life is, to a large extent, owing to the comparative exclusion of farm families from social intercourse. There are many thousands of such households who are compelled to remain secluded in their home after nightfall because the roads are too dangerous to travel in the dark. In the Old World, where good roads exist, there is a very large amount of intercourse between farm families, who think nothing of running over to a neighbor's house many miles away for gossip, a social meal, game of cards and doubtless courting. Life is made more worth living, especially to the young folks, when the evening is looked forward to with pleasure instead of being, as is too commonly the case here in farm houses, without any interest and often as a time of ennui and wearisome idleness.

But the main points are the bringing farmers closer to markets, economizing time and saving wear and tear of wagons and horses and drawing the agricultural community into closer touch with urban life.

Modern Shipbuilding.

The Great Eastern was considered a marine marvel when she was completed thirty-four years ago, but she proved a failure because she was not well designed, and, moreover, because she was too big for the time. With all the remarkable advances in steam navigation during recent years her dimensions have not been approached. She was 155 feet longer than the New York and 20 feet broader in beam, and her tonnage was 13,500 greater. The new Cunarders will make a closer approach to the Great Eastern in dimensions to tonnage, but will still be markedly inferior in this respect. But in engine power and speed all the newest liners like the New York, the Paris, the Teutonic and the Majestic are a long way in advance. The Great Eastern had four screw and four paddle engines, with a collective horse power of 10,000. The engines of the newest ships have a power ranging from 15,000 upward, and have more than doubled the great leviathan's speed. Sir Edward Harland, the great Belfast shipbuilder, recently spoke of Brunel, the designer of the Great Eastern, as a dreamer who wanted to go too fast. "His ship was a great conception," he added, "but she was wrong." Her proportions certainly were out of gear, for she had a deck too many, was too high out of water, and rolled heavily in a gale. But the greatest miscalculation of the designer was in relation to her adaptability to the conditions of ocean traffic. The ship did not meet any of the practical requirements of trade. She was suitable neither for passenger nor freight service. Possibly if she had had two sister ships trade might have been created for a Great Eastern line, but as it was she was a failure from the outset. Indeed the only useful function which her construction served was that of warning designers against building ships too big for their time, and of admonishing the shipbuilder that it was his first duty to provide steamship owners with vessels which could be profitably operated.

The recent advances in the art of shipbuilding have not been accompanied by commercial miscalculations. The tonnage and dimensions of ocean steamers have been gradually increased, but only proportionately to the normal development of freight and passenger traffic. The luxurious appointments and high speed of the new liners have been justified by the enormous expansion of the passenger trade. Every new departure has been successful, and the marvel is that with the eager competition and intense desire on the part of rival corporations to outstrip one another no serious mistake has been made. It is not uncommon to hear the prediction that the voyage between New York and Queenstown will be made before many years inside of four days; and in view of the amazing improvements in steam engineering during the last twenty years, there is no very large draft upon human credulity involved in such forecasts. Still, even if the possibility of such a mechanical achievement be admitted, it will be a designer as bold and possibly as dreamy as the builder of the Great Eastern who can deliberately undertake to plan such a ship. Great as will be the mechanical difficulties of improving upon the best liners now afloat there will be the superadded risks of making the initial cost so high and the consumption of coal so enormous that the operating expenses will far outrun any possible increase in passenger or freight traffic.