

have been unfair to keep the interest running on so large a sum of money, the amount of which the tenderers would have lost had the cheques been retained.

"Crop prospects in Manitoba were never better," is the information given us to-day by a prominent banker who is in telegraphic touch with many points in the North West. The country generally is likely to have a magnificent income from the crops, so that another prosperous year is almost certain to be enjoyed in Canada.

Tenders are called for a Grain Elevator of one million bushels capacity, for the harbour of this city. This is a very gratifying step. It breaks through what was threatening to be a very difficult barrier to the progress of this port. The specifications should call for the wood used in the elevator being made electrically fireproof, as is required of all constructive wood used in the United States navy yards. Such a building especially ought to be fireproof for its own protection and the safety of the shipping at the wharves. Wood is much more appropriate for elevators than steel, and by the process now employed, electric fireproof wood is much better than any metal for building purposes, both as regards fire resistance and safety from collapse.

In the British House of Commons on 15th inst., the financial secretary to the treasury referring to the Pacific cable, said the survey had been satisfactorily completed over 1500 miles of the proposed route, and the manufacture of cable would begin at an early date.

Mr. Chamberlain said landing sites had been selected at Queensland, New Zealand, Norfolk Island and Vancouver, and that the cable Board was satisfied as to the ability of the contractors to complete the work by the end of 1902. This looks as though the much-delayed cable was, at last, likely soon to be in course of construction.

If reports from Kansas are to be relied upon, the United States corn crop this year will be worth 200 to 250 millions of dollars less than what has been anticipated, on the average. Throughout the southern and south western States where corn is the staple product, the prevailing drought is a great calamity, which, by largely reducing the national income this year, will have far reaching consequences. Waves of torrid heat pass every summer over the area now suffering so severely, so the more sanguine onlookers are hopeful that an early rainfall with relief from the fierce heat may yet save the corn crop from destruction. The corn area includes

Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois. The crop anticipated was 1,839,068,852 bushels, which is less than last year, or 1899, 1898, 1897. In 1894 a drouth reduced the corn crop to 1,212,770,000. Were this year's crop to be equally reduced to that of 1894, the value of it would fall over \$300,000,000 below what was anticipated a month ago. It will be remembered that the crop failure of 1894 caused a social outbreak, styled "Populism," which caused great anxiety to the authorities, and disturbed the trade and credit of the country. The value of the corn crop is larger usually than that of wheat and cotton combined, having last year been \$751,000,000 against \$357,000,000 cotton, and \$323,000,000 wheat, an aggregate total of \$680,000,000. Any serious decrease in this crop affects the above States very seriously, and indirectly injures the general trade of the United States. We earnestly hope that our neighbours will be spared the threatening calamity. At the same time we would urge them to ask themselves: Why remain in a region so liable to be burnt up, when a much more productive and profitable field, and far more agreeable and healthful climate could be enjoyed in the North West of Canada?

#### ADJUSTING FIRE CLAIMS.

Seeing that claims must be an inevitable feature in fire insurance experience, the question arises, The "Insurance Record," naturally presents itself—How can the evil be most effectually mitigated? This query it proceeds to answer in following terms:

Every claim, it need hardly be said, is not necessarily an honest one; and there are multitudes of cases every year in which, even when the honesty is beyond suspicion, the liability of the company may be misconstrued by the insured, owing to his neglect to read his policy. It follows that no claim should be admitted and paid without strict scrutiny and investigation. In the average condition of fire insurance, in these degenerate times, it may be hard enough to discharge legitimate liabilities, without adding to them by carelessness or misplaced generosity. The settlement of claims is a distinct branch of fire insurance, with which, except in special circumstances, we hold it to be unwise for the manager, or any ordinary official of a company, to meddle more than he can help. The question of general or proportionate liability, of course, lies strictly within the province of the manager; but, that question settled, all the details beyond it are for a qualified assessor to deal with; and in respect of these it is evident that any interference with him in his negotiation with the insured is more likely to do harm than good. The reason is clear. It is the assessor, and the assessor alone, who comes in direct contact with the insured after the fire. It is he, and he alone, whose function it is to ascertain the facts; to discover, if he can the origin of the fire; to find out, from the insured's own record, what value was at stake when the fire occurred; to learn whether any of the conditions or warranties in the policy have been infringed; to estimate, from the information at his disposal, what is the amount of loss or damage sustained, and so forth.

It is assumed, of course, that the adjuster or assessor engaged is thoroughly qualified for the work undertaken. Such a man, if he can be trusted to act honestly towards the company or companies employing him, is worth paying well. In this respect we cannot help thinking we are, on the whole, much better off than our friends in the United States. The methods of adjustment which are used there differs so widely from the practice in this country that it is not easy