

with Canada. In the meantime M. Laurier is actuated by motives that are creditable, but the result of his offers, made on the street, so to speak, to negotiate a treaty on lines which, it is known in advance, would quite suit the Americans, and which Canada has declared she could not accept, are likely to be unfortunate.

THE CATTLE EXPORT TRADE.

An export trade which amounts in volume to seven millions of dollars in a season, is an important one. This may be predicated of the live cattle and sheep ocean export trade of Canada. The last cattle load from Montreal to Great Britain was taken out on Saturday last by steamship "Lake Winnipeg." But on the whole the season has not been a remunerative one. And this will account for the falling off of some twelve per cent. in shipments. This year the exports of live cattle from Montreal were 109,194 head, against 123,636 head for the same period last year, the first break in a series of increases year by year for ten years. There is a decrease, too, in the export of sheep, the figures this year being 32,042 against 43,372 head in the navigable season of 1890. It is to be borne in mind, however, that cattle to the number of some thousands of head were sent from Canada to Great Britain by United States ports this year, perhaps 4,000 or 5,000 head.

The reasons for the unprofitable results of the season's export cattle trade are various. In old-country markets American cattle were offering more freely than usual, in addition to which the offerings of Irish cattle were large, and British buyers appeared to have agreed early in the year on low prices. It happened, too, that a couple of United States buyers came over here and bought up all the distillery-fed cattle, some 8,000 or 9,000 in number, at full prices, which had the effect of putting up the market for our exporters generally. It would be too much to say that Canadian operators are sorry because these good Americans lost heavily on their venture; there is very little satisfaction to be derived from the fact. Liverpool and London were both bad markets for cattle during almost the whole of the five months ended with November. Glasgow yielded very fair returns in July and August, but not since. And the other Scotch ports, Dundee and Aberdeen, gave good returns from 1st July to mid-October, though bad as bad could be in May and June. The last four or six weeks have been "disastrous" generally. It is worth noting, too, that losses of cattle by stress of weather have been more than one per cent., the number so lost being placed at 1,300.

An interesting review of the trade, abounding in statistics, is given by the *Montreal Gazette* of 23rd instant. From it we learn that in the fifteen years, 1877 to 1891, both inclusive, 817,000 cattle and 795,000 sheep were shipped from Canada to trans-Atlantic ports. Cattle exports, which numbered 6,940 head in the first of these years, maintained a pretty regular increase, until in each of the two latest seasons 100,000 head was exceeded; while sheep, be-

ginning with 9,509 head, reached 93,800 head in 1886, and declined to 32,042 this season. The ports to which they found their way were as in the subjoined table:

1891.	Cattle.	Sheep.
Liverpool	32,138	16,635
Glasgow	32,647	50
Dundee	12,013	
Aberdeen	10,761	100
London	9,173	12,238
Bristol	8,964	2,913
Newcastle	3,645	106
Leith	748	
Total	110,089	32,042

The names of forty-two shippers are given, twenty-five of whom shipped less than 1,000 head each. The largest shipper was Mr. John Crowe, 20,729 head. During the season now closed 909 carloads of cattle were carried for this gentleman by the C. P. R. alone. Eakins comes next, and then Flanagan and Bickerdike.

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

We observe that the members of the Civil Service Commission have held their first meeting, and that Mr. George Hague has been chosen chairman. The choice is a deserved tribute to Mr. Hague's experience and ability. It may be premised that the work of the commission will not be light, and that it may be unpleasant. But if it result in defining plans reasonably sure to prevent robbery of the Government, great good will have been done. Another feature may properly come within the purview of this commission: the easy-going dawdling methods—what is called work in some of the departments at Ottawa. We are glad to notice that the first thing Mr. Dawson, the new Queen's Printer, did, was to notify his staff that they should not put on their coats for the day at four p.m., but should work till five. What is needed is that the work done at Parliament Hill by the employees whom the people of Canada pay, shall be placed upon the same basis as work done by any other sort of clerks, that honest and capable *work* only shall be paid for, and that duds and loafers shall not be permitted to prey on the public. Unfortunately it seems that there will always be some snobs in the public departments, they cannot be entirely got rid of; but they can be, and they should be, made to understand that they owe the public not only good service but civility.

FIRE INSURANCE MATTERS.

The discovery of natural gas and the rapid development of electricity as an illuminant and as a motive power, are two most important factors in relation to the fire hazard. The principal danger in the use of natural gas arises from the variable pressure of the gas wells. At times the pressure becomes so weak that the lights and fires in the buildings in which it is used become extinguished. When the pressure increases the gas is forced into them without being all consumed, and when a light is introduced, an explosion is sure to follow. Various devices have been invented to regulate the pressure; but the greatest care must be exercised in using natural gas to prevent accidents. The Canadian Fire

Underwriters' Association, in dealing with natural gas, adopted the rules prescribed for its use in Pittsburg, where natural gas has been in use for considerable time.

Then in the case of electric light it may be said that this is the safest of all lights, provided the installations are properly made. To secure this end the association at present pays for the inspection of all electric light plant. They find this to be absolutely necessary, as many of the construction companies use very inferior material, which renders the use of electric light extremely dangerous. The public finding that the association pays for the inspection, a clause is almost always put in the contract with construction companies that the work must be done subject to the approval of the association before it is paid for. This has a most salutary effect in securing proper wiring, and consequently less danger of accidents.

We understand that the questions of commission to agents, and the rating of dwellings in Western Ontario, were considered and dealt with at the meeting in Montreal last week, subject to the approval of the representatives of absent companies. The policy of the association in grading cities, towns and villages according to their fire appliances, has worked marvellously well. There are at the present time, we are told, eight places in class A, nine in class B, twenty-nine in class C, all having water-works of various degrees of efficiency; fifty in class D, and forty three in class E. All other places in class F, as having no fire appliances of any kind. The rates of insurance in each class, A, B, C, D, E and F, are various, the lowest rates being charged in class A, and the highest in class F. During the past year many places have had their classification raised, and several places have been lowered, not having been kept up to the standard requirements of the association.

"Sir," said one of the visiting underwriters to another, on the occasion of the parade of the fire brigade on the association's visit to Montreal, "when I look at this splendid display, and realize the immense number of fire-fighting machines, so well equipped, that Montreal possesses, the wonder is to my mind, how so many great fires occur in that city." Doubtless other people have said or thought the same thing. Incendiarism is said to be the origin of many of them. A committee was appointed in Montreal and another in Toronto to endeavor to check the growing evil, by offering a reward for the conviction of the incendiary. Chief Benoit is manifestly proud of his brigade and its equipment. Alderman Stephens, chairman of the fire committee, is regarded as a good man for the place. Much of the efficiency of the brigade is attributed to the constant supervision of the worthy alderman.

—About twenty miles from Bathurst, New Brunswick, there has been discovered, so Mr. Thomas Gordon Oliver writes us, a deposit of sulphate of iron containing a large percentage of gold and silver. The rock bearing this is said to be five miles long and 23 feet across. "From a recent test made by Ed. Jack, C.E., and Mr. A. McNichol, of Collins, Maine, the ore has given a percentage of 60 ozs. of silver and 2 ozs. of gold to the ton."