

DANGERS OF ELECTRICITY.

An Eastern underwriter has suggested that the companies offer prizes of \$300, \$200, and \$100 respectively for the best three papers submitted on the safe insulation and general lessening of the fire hazard from the use of electricity. The appropriateness of this suggestion is the more apparent when it is considered that at the annual meeting of the National Board of Fire Underwriters, held in New York a short time back, the Special Committee on Lighting, Heating and Patents reported: "We have not the information which enables us to say positively what amount of losses is fairly attributable to electricity, but the circumstantial evidence is strong enough to convince any unprejudiced observer that it has proved a most terrible engine of destruction. During the past two years the loss record has been peculiar and abnormal. In accounting for these mysterious fires we are almost forced to conclude that there is at present an unusual moral hazard, that merchants of the highest standing have become incendiaries, and that, too, without any apparent reason, or that electric current introduced for lighting is chargeable with the loss." We all know that the use of electricity both for lighting and power is immensely increasing, and it is worthy of consideration in this province if in all our electric connections the best provisions against the possibility of fire are introduced. We do not desire to be swept as St. John's, Newfoundland, recently was; but in the event of a big fire getting under way the greater proportion of the city of Victoria would only serve to supply fuel to the flames. Here is a topic which the municipal authorities would do well to discuss and come to some resolution upon.

MINISTERIAL VISITORS.

It is again announced that the Ministers of Militia and Public Works are coming out to the British Columbia coast. It is quite time they did, and that with the object of really doing something. They ought to have been here long ago with the intention of taking action, instead of which the members of the government have been accustomed to look in upon us in a mysterious sort of way and having relieved themselves of a few meaningless platitudes, have gone back home again. If they have no definite objects in view in the contemplated visit this time, they may as well be plainly told that they had better stay away. We have had just as much spoon-feed as we have any stomach for, and our appetite calls for something stronger. We are a growing community, in fact the most noticeably so of the provinces of the Dominion, and we require those advantages which our conditions demand and which it is the duty of the Dominion to supply.

For a good share of our military and naval defensive works we properly look to the Imperial authorities, who, however, while recognizing the strategic importance of our position, appear to hesitate to make the outlays which they have incurred at far less eligible points of defence, and by no means as available points of attack as are some of ours. For the works necessary

for the carrying on of our public business and for numerous other facilities essential to our development we look to the Dominion and to the Province. The latter is doing its share to the extent that its finances will allow. We want the Minister at Ottawa to come and satisfy himself as to our needs and supply them. If he does not, there will be ample reason why the members from this province should be a little more careful of how they vote with the Abbott Government.

BE NOT DISCOURAGED!

Many people are disposed to take a very despondent view of the provincial outlook, particularly as regards the trade of the city of Victoria. There is undoubtedly a good deal of cloudiness—crippled as we are in our canning and sealing industries. Under conditions like these, it certainly seems hard that smallpox should have added its influence to those that had been already powerful enough to depress us. But if we look a little further we may find that, hard as things are, they might be very much worse and there might have been circumstances under which it would have been utterly impossible for us to have looked any further. But we have the consolation of knowing that, in all probability, work will be begun at an early day on the Sidney Railway, and if the Canadian Western is not ready to construct its line within the conditions of its agreement—we have reason to believe it is—the Canadian Northern, with Mr. Northey and the Tacoma capitalists, is ready at once to take hold and push works to an early completion. Between the two companies, the road is assured, and that before long. Then there are several other works which must be prosecuted without delay, and if we can only "keep our ain fish guts for our ain sea maws," the working class element and the storekeepers will not have so much to say about hard times.

FRASER RIVER CANNERS.

An Ottawa despatch is responsible for the announcement that the Chief Clerk of the Fisheries Department has given a ruling in regard to the disposition of fish offal which practically relieves the salmon cannery of some of the most objectionable features of the existing regulations. This must be something of a set-back for Mr. Wilmot, and Sheriff Armstrong surely cannot be too well pleased, as it is a deliberate slap in his face almost as bad as that which he tried to give to the cannery interests of the Fraser. We are satisfied that Mr. Bauset would not have taken upon himself the responsibility involved in the departure, and therefore as the action is official, are pleased to score one against Wilmot and one in favor of Hon. David W. Higgins.

THE CANADIAN BLAKE.

"Our own Edward" has, it is announced, secured election to the British House of Commons in that safe Home Rule constituency, South Longford. It would appear as if much was expected

from the Canadian Blake by the Irish agitators, and were he only in the House of Commons too, it would be interesting to see the struggle for supremacy that would not be unlikely to arise between the man from South Longford and The O'Donovan Rossa from New York, of servant girl funds fame. The O'Donovan, in his own estimation, is a big man, and has done some sort of work—whatever its value. What appreciation will be made of the former Dominion Minister of Justice after he has posed before "his fellow-countrymen" as long as Jeremiah has done? What amount of agreement is there likely to be between the former member for South Bruce and some of his present associates as to what are legitimate political instrumentalities?

EDITORIAL NOTES.

RUMORS to the contrary notwithstanding, it would appear as if the sealers of Victoria had not, as has been reported, made a deal in the present season's catch of sealskins whose quality has not so far been ascertained and whose effect upon the market cannot yet be estimated. In fact, there are over 6,000 of them upon the seized Coquitlam, and the London market does not open until October. It will be some time yet before the trend of the market can be accurately ascertained, and, meantime, those interested say they can afford to wait.

THE Congress of Chambers of Congress of the Empire has passed unanimously a resolution that practical arrangements should, if possible, be devised to secure closer commercial union between the mother country and her colonies and dependencies. This is just what should be. The colonies want to extend their commercial relations in all directions; but it is not to their interests to confine themselves within the boundaries of the Empire, wide as they are, for there is a trade for us to do outside the sisterhood of the colonies and the Imperial motherland, and that it is for us to be as free as possible to cultivate and develop.

"THE real causes," says the London *Statist*, "that have brought about the fall in the price of tea, some qualities having since a year ago declined as much as 30 to 40 per cent., are, firstly, the keen competition between British-grown tea and China; secondly, the Baring crisis, which stopped speculation all over the world, and restricted credit facilities; thirdly, the fall in silver, enabling exporters from the far East to sell far more cheaply; and, fourthly, speculation for the fall, encouraged by the foregoing reasons. In the twelve months there has been a fall in silver of about 5d per ounce, or over 11 per cent. But the fall in silver only partially accounts for the state of the tea market, for the fall in tea has occurred at the same time that there has been a fall in silver from 44d to 39½d per ounce, which is a little more than 11 per cent. On the other hand, tea a year ago was considerably higher than twelve months previously, and lately there has been a decided turn for the better in the tea market."