

with by the Federal election contest, there has been a fair volume of trade in the last two weeks. In staple cottons there has been great activity, the demand having been much stimulated by the slightly lower prices now ruling. During the past spring and summer the high prices caused retailers to hold off, and now that an opportunity is afforded to replenish stocks at near the old figures, orders have come in very readily. This has had the effect of materially increasing sales of local wholesale dry goods houses so that 1904 will come very close to last year's record.



WINNIPEG GROWING.

The rapid growth of Winnipeg imposes much work upon the municipal officers of the city in all directions. But perhaps the most noticeable effect is produced in the engineer's department. Here work is in hand, on and under the streets, and in the pumping station and plant, to the extent of nearly a million dollars. The recent fire has shown in what danger the city may be at any time through lack of water-pressure for fire purposes, and instant effort is being put forth to have this rectified. The probable cost of the pumping station and plant now being constructed is, we are told, \$80,000, and the new water mains will cost more than \$90,000. Paving the streets is a heavy job, the residential part of the city is growing so. The cost of asphalt paving now being laid down is placed at \$273,000; that of macadam at \$240,000; of cedar block paving at \$6,000. Then there are sewers, \$390,000, of which the biggest contract is the Aubrey street trunk sewer. Granolithic walks to the tune of \$71,000 are being put down, and \$15,000 worth of plank walks. The aggregate cost of these is placed at \$954,000, so that the statement recently made that a million dollars' worth of work is being prosecuted by the city engineers is not exaggerated. And indeed the rate of the city's expansion can hardly be exaggerated.

Winnipeg journals resented, we remember, the notion that the fire-fighting apparatus of eastern cities was any criterion for Winnipeg, or that Winnipeg underwriters ought in any sense to be governed by the fire premiums exacted in the east of Canada. "The rates should be based," said the Winnipeg Tribune some months ago, "not upon non-efficiency of the fire brigades in eastern towns and cities, but upon the state of our own brigade and the conditions prevailing here." Would it be ungenerous to remind that journal of its words, in the light of the recent fire? Then the aldermen were discussing the starting of a fire insurance fund by the city, and paying the usual premiums into that instead of paying them to insurance companies. This was only three weeks before the fire of 11th October in that city, which destroyed property worth \$500,000 or \$600,000, and cost the insurance companies, we are told, over \$300,000. Alderman Cox and Alderman Harvey thought the idea a good one; "the city had been paying insurance for years, and had never had any serious fires. The buildings are well scattered, making it almost impossible for a fire causing great loss to occur." Have these gentlemen seen the ruins of Bulman's block, and of Ash-down's warehouse? Were they at the fire of October

11th, and will they admit that it was serious? Have they any more sense now than they had on September 21st? We observe, by the way, that the aforesaid Alderman Cox was entrusted with the renewing of policies for some \$64,000 on city property of various kinds, the said policies expiring on 1st October. It happened that none of the city property so insured burned at the recent fire. But we should be glad to know if Mr. Cox adheres to his rosy view of municipal fire insurance, or whether, since the fire, he has renewed those policies.



CANADIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCIES.

It is pleasing to hear, as we do from London, from our correspondent in Manchester, and from several Canadian visitors, accounts of the improvement in the official representation of Canada by commissioners at various points in the United Kingdom. Improvement, we mean, as compared with ten or twenty years ago. The Canadian offices are better fitted; the literature they are furnished with is better; the men are more qualified, for they are largely Canadians of experience, and, therefore, able to talk about the country understandingly. Take, for example, the Commercial Agent of Canada in Birmingham, Mr. Peter B. Ball. He has established himself well in the confidence of the manufacturers of that important city, even although he has told them some very plain truths about their lack of suitable enterprise in seeking for Canadian trade. A recent visitor to Birmingham tells us that Mr. Ball is giving, of late, lectures on Canada, illustrated with lantern slides, after the fashion set years ago by our Grand Old Man, Lord Strathcona. And he takes pains, our informant adds, to explain minutely to his audiences matters which tend to root out of the minds of his auditory the absurd notions about this country and its people which have so firm a hold in the imagination of English people.

We have been told that the United States authorities make a practice of bringing their consuls or commercial agents back from foreign lands to their own country every two years in order that they may not lose touch with people or things American. Similarly, might it not be a good thing for our Ottawa authorities to bring back men like Mr. Larke, the excellent Canadian agent at Sydney, Australia, who has not been home for years, Mr. Burke, of Jamaica, and Mr. Ball, in order that they may confer face to face with our manufacturers and exporters for several months and see for themselves the progress that their own country is making. It is noteworthy that Mr. Ball has been at some pains to expose to the exporters of the Black Country the dishonest methods by which an unscrupulous agent in England for two Montreal trade journals has for several years been getting advertisements from British export houses. The Monetary Times was the first to expose, some two years ago, the doings of this clever cheat of a Doctor, so-called. We showed, on the authority of one of the departments at Ottawa, how baseless was his claim to act on behalf of the Canadian Government; and how iniquitous was his pretence that the