Hugh McLean, St. Thomas; treasurer, John H. Dunlop, Toronto; vice-president for Ontario, T. H. Carter, Toronto.

IN THE DRY GOODS STORE.

A citizen of Jamaica recently in Canada says that our cotton manufacturers should find a profitable market in that island for their goods.

Spring goods are slowly making themselves seen in the retail stores, and within a fortnight the trade will be in the midst of the season.

The London feather sale was concluded last week, and, according to advices, with bidding brisk up to the close. Prices were firm throughout and show an advance on whites and feminas of from 10 to 15 per cent. Boas have advanced 20 per cent., with spadones showing an advance of 25 per cent. Blacks and drabs showed an advance of 10 per cent., with floss ruling 10 per cent. cheaper. The quality of the offering was generally good.

According to official reports published at St. Petersburg, the result of the Russian flax crop of 1897 has been disappointing in most districts of the empire. The area sown was considerably larger than in 1896, but the drought in June caused the plant to be stunted and thin, so much so that at many points the crop yielded much worse results than in the previous year. Speaking generally, the yield was large only when the area planted was much increased; elsewhere the crop has turned out as bad or worse than the year before. The quality is generally very middling and the fiber weak, with the exception only of the produce of Jaropolsk and Wologda, which show a better quality than in 1896.

An outline of a characteristic Western wedding is given in a recent issue of the Chicago *Tribune*. Here is an incident of it: "Theophilus," said the officiating clergyman at the altar, "do you take this woman"——. "Lady," corrected the bride, formerly of the ribbon department at Spotcash & Co.'s dry goods emporium. Curious, that while no one objects to a man being called a man, there is such a pronounced objection among the vulgar or ignorant to calling a woman a woman. It is hardly to be expected that the wife of Theophilus (of Chicago) possessed a copy of the Standard Dictionary, but if she did, a look at the word "lady" in the department of Faulty Diction, end of 2nd volume, would show her how not to use it.

From Leeds comes the report that: "Buying or ordering of spring and summer specialties for home consumption is limited, but that can only be *pro tem*. However, continentals, Canadians and a few Americans are concerning themselves with them in a real business-like fashion. The designs and ensemble of these coatings, suitings and trouserings, which do so much credit to the textile department of the Yorkshire College, get by far most attention. Prices for pattern parcels and for quick future delivery are in the aggregate from 5 to 7½ per cent. higher than any goods of the same class were a year ago. The market for medium and low tweeds, serges, Cheviots, vicunas, and union and other worsteds has some show of revival. The reason for this is that the engineers are going to work again, and the ready-made clothing factories are taking a more hopeful view of the future."

INSURANCE MATTERS.

The shareholders of the North-West Fire Insurance Company held their fourteenth annual meeting in Winnipeg last week. The following directors were elected: Messrs. Colin Inkster, president; W. R. Dick, vice-president; G. W. Baker, W. R. Allen, Thos. Gilroy, D. E. Sprague, J. Stanley Hough, Chief Justice Sir Thomas W. Taylor, J. A. Christie, Brandon; Hon. Walter Clifford, Austin; J. C. Kavanagh, Brandon, and Ernest M. Williams, Millwood. The manager is Mr. G. O. Woodman.

A compliment to the life agent was recently paid in an address by Walter S. Nichols, managing editor of the *Insurance Monitor*. "The Agent as a Dominant Factor in the Modern Business World," was his subject. In his view, the present tendency of the age is toward the agency. Hardly any business is done directly by the principal, and the successful agent in life insurance is much greater than the officer, because in him rested the responsibility of combating bad legislation, ignorance and fanaticism.

Klondyke life insurance policies are the latest thing in connection with the North-West rush, says the Winnipeg *Free Press*. "A man before leaving civilization and going into the dangers of the far north, can insure five or six thousand, and should he starve to death, his family at home would be provided for. The price is a little higher than ordinary policies. The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, of which Mr. E. McDonald is western manager, is the company to introduce the new scheme."

Canadian policyholders in the Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association are not alone in their chagrin at the recent rise in that company's assessments. The Colorado policyholders are enraged. Last Monday night an indignation meeting was held, at which those interested protested against the policy of the company. Many of the Colorado pioneers are insured in the association, according to a despatch from Denver. About $400,000 worth of policies in this State are involved.

At the annual meeting of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters this week, a committee was appointed to formulate a schedule for the specific rating of that part of the city known as the congested district. In this rating, fire protective appliances will be taken into consideration. All the officers of the past year were re-elected. The president made a brief address reviewing the past year. There was a good attendance of Toronto members besides the following managers of companies from Montreal: Messrs. George Simpson, of the Royal; Lansing Lewis, of the Caledonian; G. T. C. Smith, of the Liverpool, London and Globe, and Thomas Davidson, of the North British and Mercantile.

CLEARING-HOUSE FIGURES.

The following are the figures of the Canadian clearing houses for the week ended with Thursday, February 17th, 1898, compared with those of the previous week:

Clearings.	Feb. 17th, 1898.	Feb. 10th, 1898.
Montreal	$16,002,973	$15,811,986
Toronto	9,062,524	8,066,341
Winnipeg	1,186,546	1,453,593
Halifax	1,012,538	1,288,741
Hamilton	652,507	783,920
St. John	491,457	621,980
	$28,408,545	$28,026,561

Aggregate balances this week, $4,686,887; last week, $4,234,977.

—On Monday last the Canadian Pacific authorities surprised the Street by announcing a dividend of two and a half per cent. on the ordinary stock, making with the dividend already paid, 4 per cent. for the past year. The usual 2 per cent. was declared on the preference stock. The following figures give the results of the year's working:

Gross earnings	$24,049,534 00
Working expenses	13,745,758 00
Net earnings	10,303,775 00
Income from other sources	340,706 00
Total net income	10,644,482 00
Fixed charges, including guarantees and interest on land bonds	6,783,377 00
Net revenue available	3,861,115 00

This very satisfactory result has sent the stock up on the Canadian exchanges, and may be expected to have a like effect abroad.

—The annual meeting of the Merchants Bank of Halifax was held on Wednesday, 9th February. Among other business done was the passing by the shareholders of a by-law increasing the capital of the bank from $1,500,000 to $2,000,000, the issue and allotment of stock being left to the discretion of the directors. Upon the ballot being taken for the election ofdirectors for the ensuing year the following gentlemen were found to be the choice of the meeting:—Thomas E. Kenny, Thomas Ritchie, Michael Dwyer, Wiley Smith, H. H. Fuller, H. G. Bauld, David MacKeen. Mr. Kenny was chosen president, and Mr. Ritchie, vice-president.

—It has been stated that the Bank of Montreal would presently open a branch in the Yukon country. But no definite official announcement of the matter has been made. Another bank has, however, arranged with the Government to establish a branch in the Yukon for the handling of bullion and the transaction of the Federal Government's business. This is the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Mr. Wills, manager of the Orangeville branch of the Bank of Commerce, is to represent the bank at Dawson.

—The balance at credit of depositors in the Canadian Government Savings Banks amounted at the close of 1897 to $15,738,645. The deposits made during January were $224,141, and withdrawals $215,744.

—A despatch from Winnipeg says that the Manitoba Legislature has been called for the despatch of business on Thursday, March 10th. It is added that the session is expected to be a very brief one.

—A branch of the Ontario Bank is being opened this week in Alliston, under the charge of Mr. James Morris, formerly accountant at Ottawa branch.