

**HOPS.**—Small brewers are buying from hand to mouth, and the larger ones appear to be supplied. The price ranges from 12c. to 15c., according to quality. Holdings do not appear to be large.

**PAINTS AND OILS.**—There is a fair trade moving, though it has been greatly hampered by the teamsters' strike. Prices are firm, and all indications point to advances. Linseed oil has taken a big move upwards, boiled going to 83c. and 85c., and raw to 80c. and 82c. Turpentine after its heavy drop, has reacted a little, and is now quoted 73c. to 75c. Vermilion, Eng., also shows a rise of 10c., and we now quote it 95c. and \$1. All other lines are at last week's figures.

**PROVISIONS.**—The market is firmer in tone. Butter receipts have fallen off, and dairy is now quoted 12 to 13c., with no accumulation. Cheese is quiet, and new is easier at 11½ to 12c. Old is practically out of the market, but what little remains is firm at 13½c. Hog products continue firm as they have not yet reached a price in ratio to the price of hogs; long clear shows a slight advance, and is now quoted at 9c. Hams and lard are unchanged. Eggs are higher, and are quoted 12 to 12½c., but the rise is thought to be only temporary, as packers do not care to handle them at the price. Dried and evaporated apples are quiet and unchanged.

**SEEDS.**—The season for the sale of red clover and timothy is practically over, but a good jobbing trade is being done in Hungarian, millet and fodder corn. We quote: Hungarian and common millet, 75c. to 90c., and German, or golden millet, \$1.15 to \$1.25 per bushel of 48 lbs. Fodder corn runs from 65c. to \$1.20, according to variety.

**WOOL.**—There is nothing doing in fleece washed yet; for unwashed, 10c. is the market price. The demand from the mills is small.

### THE OLDEST COPPER MINES.

The copper mines of Sinai, on the northwest of Arabia, were worked thousands of years before the Christian era. It is stated in Comptes Rendus that those copper mines are the most ancient of which history makes mention. According to authentic documents they were worked from about 5,000 years B.C., until about 1,300 or 1,200 B.C. Their possession had been the object of several wars, but had been abandoned for 3,000 years on account of the poverty of the ores. It was from these mines that was obtained the sceptre of Pepi I., a king of the Sixth Dynasty. This sceptre, made of pure copper, is preserved in the British Museum. The adits still exist, as well as the ruins of the furnaces, the crucibles, the huts of the miners, and some fragments of their tools. In some of the specimens obtained there occur three ores—turquoise, copper-hydrosilicate and sandstones impregnated with copper. Among the debris have been found slags and cinders, but there is no evidence of the use of fluxes. Some of the fragments of tools contain arsenic which was used by the Greek and Egyptian alchemists for hardening copper.

—The brush factory in the asylum at Charlottetown, P.E.I., has commenced operations. The patients have been looking forward with apparent pleasure to its advent. Most of the first day was taken up in instructing them in the manufacture of scrubbing brushes. Several of the inmates succeeded in turning out several very creditable specimens. The patients thoroughly enjoy their avocation, and the management is much pleased with the first attempt to employ the time of the unfortunates.

### INSOLVENCY LEGISLATION.

A bill is now before the Territorial Assembly, which provides for a change in the regulations regarding administration of insolvent estates. It is proposed to make it compulsory that assignees shall be residents of the districts in which insolvent estates are located. It is understood that this bill has already passed its second reading, and while introduced by a private member, is not being opposed by the Government. The effect of such legislation should the bill become law cannot fail to be contrary to the interests of all parties concerned. The objection to the existing system is said to be that the assignee is generally a resident of Winnipeg. This is so, and is due to the fact that in almost every case the largest creditors are Winnipeg and eastern jobbing houses, and they are interested in having the estates administered by persons who know how to do so economically. A local assignee would in the nature of the case very rarely be skilled in such business, and unnecessary losses would be sure to follow. The only recourse open to eastern creditors, if this bill passes, will be to curtail their credits in the Territories, and sell their goods only for cash, excepting to customers whose ability to pay is at all times beyond question.—Winnipeg Commercial.

### NEW YORK FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT.

Fire Marshal Seery issued his annual report last week. It covers the year 1899, and states that the fires and fire losses of that year were almost double those of the previous twelve months. During the year, the fire department investigated 5,893 fires, as against 4,239 for the year previous. The losses for 1899 amounted to 7,458,845, as against \$4,155,199 for 1898. The report states that this large increase of loss was due mainly to the three large fires of the year, namely, the Windsor Hotel fire, loss, \$1,250,000; the Rogers, Peet & Co. fire, loss, \$700,000, and the Campbell paper factory fire, with a loss of \$700,000. Mr. Seery, according to the Chronicle, criticizes the laxness of insurance agents in the classes of risks assumed, and asserts that too high valuations are placed on property, thus creating an incentive for incendiarism. He also calls attention to the prevalence of defective insulation of electric light wiring, and recommends the licensing of all persons handling electric apparatus.

Another of the New York fire officers, Mr. Scannell, city fire commissioner, tells the Herald that there has been an increase of fifteen per cent. in the number of fires over last year, and they seem still to be on the increase. "I do not wish to criticize the insurance companies, but it appears to me that they have not been quite so conservative as they might be in taking risks. It would do no harm if they would investigate more thoroughly the value of property which they are asked to insure. If a man has his property insured for its full value, it is natural that he should be less cautious with regard to fire than if he were likely to lose a large sum of money in case a fire occurred.

"I have been thinking how this increase in fires could best be checked. The law requires that fire alarms must be placed in hotels and in lodging houses. This has not always been done, but I have been enforcing it recently in the lodging houses on the east side, and, though several fires have occurred in them, there has been comparatively little loss. The commonest difficulty with apartment house fires is the delay in sending in the alarm."

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