

NOT FOR SHOW.

It will be remembered that, some months since, on the occasion of a firemen's demonstration when the Montreal brigade were turned out for show purposes and the city was left unprotected, a fire of very considerable proportions occurred, the electric light works among other institutions being materially damaged. And Montreal, owing to the excellence of its appliances and service enjoys the benefit of low fire insurance premiums. Here, in Victoria, however, where we do not indulge in such follies and where Chief Deasy and his small band of assistants attend strictly to business, we are by no means as well appreciated by the underwriters, who classify us with communities which are rated at a high price.

Why this should be we fail to see, except that the gross amount of insurance business to be done here is only small and unless a heavy premium was charged it would be impossible to maintain so many agencies. Considering that as matters stand there is no competition in so far as the premiums to be paid, we think, as we have previously said, that the business could be much more advantageously divided among a far smaller number of companies. But, in regard to the show business, we were glad to see that the Victoria Fire Brigade were not turned out to receive the Governor-General.

Had they done so, the city would have been left in a completely unprotected condition, and we are sure that His Excellency will have taken the will for the deed in this particular. Victoria did him all possible honor, and the Mayor and Fire Committee did not forget the fact that they had a special duty to discharge to the citizens.

CO-OPERATIVE COLONY.

Had it not been for a recent disaster in the vicinity of Cape Commerell, by which a young man lost his life, but little would have been known of the Canadian Co-operative Commonwealth, which has been established on Malcolm Island, in order to work out some of the ideas evolved by Henry George and others, and believed to be in advance of those upon which several communities have been established in the United States. The wage system is declared by the promoters of this departure to be "but a more villainous form of slavery," while each member of the society, so long as he remains in its jurisdiction, is a joint owner in its property interests, and has an equal right to clothing, food and shelter. Money is not to be used among the members as such, all commerce within the organization being carried on in the name of the organization and by its proper officers, currency

only being used by the organization for outside transactions in which obligations cannot be otherwise satisfied.

We think that more ought to be known in regard to this departure, and no doubt during the process of its incorporation, which is to be obtained by special act of Parliament, considerable information will be offered. We observe that according to the memorandum circular, no one is debarred from membership on account of age, sex or condition, the association recognizing that "in their greater need shall consist their greater claim against this society, but no person under the age of eighteen years shall have a vote in the affairs of this society, or any adult person who shall be unable to read and write, and every voter must be conversant with the moral law as recorded in the commandments and the constitution of this order." Among the officers of the colony, we note Professor Alcock, of Vancouver, and B. H. West, of this city.

BOOTH'S IMMIGRATION SCHEME.

General Booth, who is coming out this way and will be here shortly has been preparing a colonization scheme, for, it is said, South Africa. There are some who have come to the conclusion that it is his ultimate intention to place some of his people in Canada and in consequence they have been rather exercised on that account. But we fail to see why they should cause alarm, inasmuch, as on the whole the Salvationists have not undertaken anything what they have not done well. The General, in his book, complains of the plan of many immigration movements having been to drop men and women into countries without any regard to their possession of ability to earn a livelihood and, therefore as he says himself, there is wonder that the colonies should object to being made dumping grounds for men and women totally unsuited to their new conditions.

Wherever General Booth sends his people there need, we think, be little apprehension, for a farm colony has already been established in England, where the intending colonists will be put through a course of education in agricultural work, and drilled in economy, industrious habits, patience and perseverance. This course of training will be persisted in from three to five years before the people are transferred. We may say that it requires no small amount of moral courage to join the Army, and to live up to its requirements. This is a good foundation on which to base a colonization scheme for only people who are persevering and industrious and at the same time have good moral qualifications could stand the tests to which they would be subjected. Moreover, not only are the colonists prepared

for their new life but their homes in the rural districts would be made ready for them before they arrived. To these new homes they would be escorted, in them they would be established and afterwards they would be looked after in a thoroughly systematic manner.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

It is announced, that as an outcome of the visit to Ottawa of Hon. Premier Davie, an amicable understanding has been reached in connection with the railway belt dispute, while in regard to dyking along the Fraser River, the Dominion and Provincial Governments have arranged to appoint a joint commission to devise a comprehensive system of protection of the banks, similar action being contemplated with respect to the Columbia River near Revelstoke.

In compliance with promises recently made by Hon. Mackenzie Bowell and other members of the Government, an Order-in-Council has been passed authorizing a refund of 99 per cent. of the duty on articles entering into the manufacture of goods for export, instead of 90 per cent. as heretofore. The effect of the change will be to place the manufacturers of Canada in the most favorable position to compete with the manufactured products of adjacent and other countries in foreign markets.

Recent advices from Australia show business in the import market to have been void of animation. There was limited inquiry and poor prices. The weather had been variable, but there was reported to be a good show for the coming warm season. The New South Wales Assembly was considering a new land bill, while several important measures were under consideration affecting commerce and shipping. Confidence was being slowly restored, money was easier and property sales had been more numerous. Mining matters were quiet, the coal trade particularly not being as brisk as could be desired.

The contract for the Dominion Government buildings in Victoria has, we notice, been awarded to Mr. Frederick Toms, of Ottawa. They are estimated to cost \$190,000, in addition to the site for which \$75,000 were paid. Messrs. Elford & Smith, of Victoria, were some \$8,000 higher than the successful tenderer. It is said, that work on the new buildings will be commenced at an early date, and that it will be vigorously prosecuted. We hope so, as a work of some magnitude like this ought to give employment to a considerable number of people, whose prospects are not at present particularly bright. Mr. Toms is said to be a man who thoroughly understands his business, and, from a commercial point of view, is a thoroughly reliable man. He may be expected here in a few days, to make arrangements for going to work.