

Prominent Topics.

Census Taking. The transfer of the Census and Statistics branch of the Department of Agriculture, to the Department of Trade and Commerce is a good move. The Department of Agriculture has been a sort of maid of all work to the government, and everything not manifestly appertaining by its nature to some other department, was placed under the care of the Minister of Agriculture, including such things, as patents, copyrights, statistics, food inspection and all kinds of odds and ends. The work of the Department of Trade and Commerce involves the collection of a good deal of statistical information. Another thing in favour of the change is that the taking of the Census cannot be much more unsatisfactory under the Department of Trade and Commerce than it has long been under the Department of Agriculture.

The Floods. Canada has not altogether escaped the spring floods, which have done such enormous damage in the United States especially along the shores of the Mississippi, but in the Dominion the losses so far have been comparatively insignificant. Until, however, the ice moves out of the St. Lawrence we cannot say that the danger is past. The condition of the river is exceptional through a number of causes. The winter was late starting and late in moderating. The cold was unusually severe, and consequently the ice is unusually thick and firm. All over the continent the risk of alternate droughts and floods has been steadily growing through the wholesale destruction of those great natural reservoirs, the forests. The same cause has brought about disastrous results in Europe and some on this continent. It would be much more sensible to prevent floods by forest conservation than to partially control them by dams and levees and other expedients which may in themselves be sources of danger.

Westmount Charter. A special report has been made to the Westmount City Council by the Legislative Committee on the recent changes in the charter.

The principal changes are the abolition of the ward system, the Council being reduced to a mayor and five aldermen elected by the whole city, and some important financial provisions. These are as follows:

The council may borrow money by means of inscribed stock, and it may also appoint a registrar to keep transfer books.

The sinking fund commissioners are authorized to invest in stocks or debentures of other municipalities in Canada in addition to the investments heretofore provided for. It is also provided that the city is bound to pay the necessary money semi-annually to provide for the redemption of bonds, debentures or stock.

The council has the right by an absolute majority to commercialize Sherbrooke street and to grant

exemption or commutation of taxes to sports associations and military halls.

The mayor and aldermen are exempted from jury service and incorporated companies are granted the franchise.

Property Interest Necessary.

"When a man takes and keeps a life insurance policy he has anchored himself to a property interest," said Alfred Hurrell, attorney of the Association of Life Insurance Presidents, in a recent address to the Life Underwriters' Association of Syracuse. "The cure for the unrest and discontent which is being fomented among the people, is to have more of them get an interest in property. The more a man saves the less liable is he to be attracted by new political schemes which may unsettle values and interfere with the ancient rights of property. The less a man has, the more is he willing that any new theory or plan be tried out at the expense of the other fellow. That householder who rents will be much more indifferent to the cost and efficiency of his municipal government than will he who owns his home and pays taxes thereon. It is all a question of whose ox is gored, but this much we know,—it is he who is thrifty and saving who is the responsible and conservative citizen, while the prodigals of high and low estate constitute the riff-raff of society."

N. Y. Republican Platform.

The platform adopted by the Republican State Convention of New York, while endorsing President Taft, declares against the referendum and the recall and expresses strong views on the tariff and banking questions. Regarding the tariff it says:—"We believe in the Republican principle of protection to American workingmen, American industries, and the American farmer. Customs duties should be adjusted so as to cover the difference between the cost of production in this and in other countries, and such adjustments should be made by Congress upon facts ascertained by an impartial board with authority to make a thorough investigation. We condemn the action of the Democratic party in the House of Representatives, who long professed to favor a tariff commission to ascertain the facts upon which customs might be based, and who immediately after obtaining power repudiated their former professions and proceeded to pass tariff bills without regard to the facts reported and without inquiring into or caring for the needs of American business or American labor."

Regarding the banking law it says, "We believe in the amendment of the national banking law and the creation of a national reserve association, together with a provision for an elastic system of currency and credit, properly safeguarded and free from the domination of any sectional or special financial influence."