

John Burn, M.P. As the old saying is, "Bees alighting cease to hum," so, having alighted in Downing street in receipt of an income thirty times larger than the highest wages earned by men of his class, we can hardly expect this remarkably able mechanic to talk socialism to his colleagues in the Council Chamber or any more in Trade's Union circles.

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Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL, assistant secretary for the colonies, with his youthful impetuosity, was no sooner appointed than he laid down the line of policy that would be pursued by the Colonial office. He would have been wiser had he waited for the responsible minister to have done this. As a subordinate he was rather "fresh" in preceding his chief.

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THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS VERY MIXED IN ENGLAND.—Several of the leading English papers strongly advised Sir Campbell-Bannerman, premier, to retire to the House of Lords, where the Government is remarkably weak, the leader, Lord Tweedmouth, being a peer of no weight any way.

The election cry is to be, "Free Trade," which is somewhat peculiar, as this system has not been assailed by the opposite party. It would cause no surprise in the old land were the new Government to fail in securing a working majority as a result of the elections, in which case Mr. Balfour might be recalled, or, more likely the elections may point to Mr. Chamberlain being the people's choice.

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REPORT ON GAS PRODUCTION AND SALE IN MONTREAL.—Professor Bemis, of Cleveland, Ohio, under instruction from the City Council, has been investigating the cost of illuminating gas in this city and of its distribution. He has reported on these questions also as to the cost of building a gas plant equal to the needs of this city, which he fixes at \$4,171,000, and \$5,056,819 if made large enough for several years to come. He estimates the worth of the plant of the Montreal Gas Company as \$2,919,750. This low figure is accounted for by its having depreciated in value and having become inadequate for the services required. He points out, what is quite well known to those who have been observers of gas company reports, that a large increase in the consumption of gas may occur without any increase in the expenses of distribution.

Indeed, experience shows that when gas is made more popular and the consumption largely increases it is not only made for a less outlay but the percentage of distribution charges are much reduced in proportion to the total cost.

Mr. Bemis considers that gas could be delivered to consumers in this city for 87 cents per 1,000 feet, or if separate prices were charged, they should be, 90 cents for lighting and 80 cents for fuel gas.

As the same kind of gas is used for both purposes,

as it all comes through the same mains and pipes, the allowance for "fuel gas" can only be made to encourage the use of gas for cooking and heating. It is, however, alleged that, the supply of "fuel gas" utilizes the mains in the day time when, otherwise they would be out of use. It must be borne in mind that the climatic conditions in Montreal are not familiar to Mr. Bemis.

An arrangement by which the city would participate in the profits of the lighting and power system is the most desirable as well as the most likely plan to be accomplished.

THE CHRONICLE some time ago outlined such a scheme and has on several occasions shown its feasibility and advantages.

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A FINANCIAL SCANDAL IN CHICAGO has occurred by the collapse of three of the largest financial institutions in the western States which are, the Chicago National Bank, the Home Savings Bank and the Equitable Trust Company. These companies were under the control of John R. Walsh, who was president of the National Bank and the Trust Company.

The collapse was caused by a large portion of the funds of the three institutions being locked up in the private enterprises of Walsh, chiefly in the bonds of the Southern Indiana Railway and the Bedford Quarries Company. The comptroller, the State auditor, and committee of the Chicago Clearing House on inspecting the securities on which heavy advances had been made valued them at one half what Walsh had estimated for advances. It has been made known that the comptroller, who acts as inspector of banks, has had a dispute for some time with the National Bank regarding its business proceedings, especial objection having been taken to the loans made to the private enterprises of Walsh. The Comptroller now states that the promises made that these loans would be materially reduced were never observed.

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THE AMERICAN BANK INSPECTION SYSTEM SERIOUSLY DEFECTIVE.—This is no new phase of the bank inspection system in the United States. The Comptroller's officials make representations to him when they discover something objectionable in a bank's condition, he calls on the bank to have this something removed, or put in better shape, and there the matter ends unless the bank is desirous of complying with the Comptroller's instructions, if not, those instructions are ignored.

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ANOTHER DEFECT in the American bank inspection system is this: Banks act in concert to deceive the inspector by lending each other securities when his visits are made. Thus, a batch of bonds, etc., not infrequently passes to and fro doing duty as part of the assets of several banks. This had been done in the three institutions which have failed. Then, the