

THE CHICAGO DISASTER.

The mayor of Chicago, who on New Year's day ordered the closing of nineteen theatres in that city because they are not provided with the sort of fire-proof drop curtain that the by-laws require, has made some strong statements as to the condition of the interior which a personal visit disclosed to him. "The fact remains," he says, "that there would have been no panic if the apparatus in this theatre, which, judged by all ordinary standards, was the best-equipped play-house in the city, had been in proper working condition. There is no getting beyond that fact." Hundreds of lives would have been saved, he says, in the disaster at the Iroquois theatre if the asbestos curtain had been constructed as it should have been. He found disregard of city ordinances in the state of the exits and the gallery stairs, and an alderman who accompanied him in the inspection, declares indignantly, "This theatre should never have been allowed to open."

It is the old story of the easy-going neglect of precautions which the law ordered for the saving of life in case of fire. Possibly the responsibility for this neglect may yet be placed upon the proper shoulders, whether of the theatre owners or of the municipal officers, whose business it was to see that city by-laws were complied with. The chief electrician of the Iroquois theatre, where the disaster of Wednesday occurred which caused the death of 586 people, has been formally arrested, charged with manslaughter. Other arrests have been made; and it is possible that this dreadful calamity may result in arrangements that will minimize the chances of such another horror.

Monday's newspapers state that it is ordered by Mayor Harrison that every theatre in Chicago must hereafter comply with the following regulation before being allowed to re-open. They must have:

Steel roll curtains.

Wide exits.

No combustibles of any kind in the house furnishings.

Fireproofed scenery.

No calcium or "spot" lights to be used on the stage.

Skylights above the stage provided with automatic lids, to permit the egress of smoke, fire and gas.

Separate stairways, each exit having its own stairs to the street.

THE FIELDS OF QUEBEC.

It illustrates the great extent of Canada, and incidentally the proportion of it yet unoccupied, to be told that one of its Provinces, Quebec, contains 218,723,000 acres, and that only 14,444,000 acres, or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., is occupied as farm land. What the remainder is, what proportion of it forest, lake or wilderness, we are not yet exactly informed. But so much as we have stated is derived from Bulletin No. 18 of the Census of 1901. This document declares that there are 150,000 holders of land in Quebec, 20,000 of whom, in round numbers, have from half an acre to five acres each; 24,000 from five to fifty acres; 90,000 from fifty to two hundred acres, and 16,374 201 acres and over. We should have said that 135,625 are owners, 9,284 tenants, and 5,690 both owners and tenants. It is interesting, and not a

little remarkable, that nine-tenths of the farm land (93.18 per cent.) is owned by those who work on it, and only 6.82 per cent. is under lease. This makes a contrast with Ontario, where close upon 15 per cent. is under lease, and a trifle over 85 per cent. owned by those who live on it.

Rather more than half the occupied land is described as improved. For example, there are 4,704,000 acres in field crops and 3,360,000 acres in pasture. There are orchards covering 34,096 acres; vineyards and nurseries 312 acres; while 28,809 acres are devoted to vegetables and small fruits. The proportion of the land devoted to hay and oats is astonishing to any one who does not know that these are the two principal crops of the Province; 2,548,450 acres were in the census year devoted to hay and 1,350,031 acres to oats; the yield being a ton of hay and 24 bushels of oats per acre. Only 139,000 acres were devoted to spring wheat and 104,000 acres to barley, which yielded 14 bushels and 24 bushels per acre respectively, but buckwheat, peas, corn and rye covered 228,000 acres in all. Potatoes were planted on 127,000 acres, and yielded an average of 134 bushels. Hops, flax and clover all appear in the list, but more prominent than all these is tobacco, of which no less than 7,655,000 pounds was grown on 8,661 acres. Most of this is consumed in the habitants' pipes, but part of it is sold, as Essex and Kent leaf from Ontario is sold, to be manufactured in Quebec, Granby, or Montreal, into smoking or chewing tobacco.

It is estimated that the value of the agricultural lands and buildings in the Province is \$350,550,154, of implements and machinery \$27,038,205, and of live stock \$58,488,457. Here is a total of \$436,076,000. The crops and animal products were considered worth in the census year \$85,034,401. The statistics of fruit are not without interest. The census says there were 2,256,000 apple trees, some lovely "fameuses" and others among them, no doubt, which yielded about a bushel apiece in 1901. Cherry trees and plum trees were in number 394,000 and 364,000 respectively. Pear trees numbered 11,823 and peach trees only 332. Grape vines, however, were numerous. For statistics of the produce of animals, from milch cows to bees, we find we have no room.

PATENT MEDICINE DISCOUNTS.

A little war is going on between the manufacturers of proprietary drugs or patent medicines and the wholesale druggists. The latter have for some time past contended that they were not getting large enough discounts from the manufacturers, and have made several efforts to have these adjusted on a basis more satisfactory to themselves. They succeeded in doing this in the case of several medicines which were just being placed on the market, but some of the larger and better known dealers have held out. Now, it is said, the wholesalers' association threaten to boycott the preparations of the latter unless the discount, which at present ranges from 10 to 15 per cent., is made larger. The manufacturers claim that the discount at present allowed is just as large as that which is accepted by jobbers on the other side of the line without demur. Against this, however, it may be stated that in a country like Canada, whose territory is equal in size with the United States, but