

FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

Western dairymen hold an association in Winnipeg on February 15th.

St. John, N.B., has a new biscuit factory, the owner of which is C. D. Ross.

A cable from London, of 10th instant, reports the market there for India and Ceylon teas very firm. Japan teas on spot strongly held, but Chinas rather flat.

Late advices report a very small stock of Grenoble walnuts in the primary market, and the prices quoted there are considerably above a parity with this market.—*N. Y. Journal and Bulletin*.

The *Grocery World* states that machinery for picking olives has been put up by the Greenwich Packing Co. of New York city. Hitherto the pitted olives sold here have been imported in that condition from France.

A shipment of Triton brand canned lobster to New York in one pound flat tins, coming on a practically bare market, found last week an immediate outlet. The price quoted was \$2 per dozen. The goods were packed in Cape Town, South Africa.

The duty collected in Canada in January was \$255,000 less than that collected in the first month of the year 1896. Of this, one-half was due to decrease in sugar imports. The total value of sugar passed was \$644,685 in January, 1896, and \$207,006 in the same month, 1897. The duties amounted to \$169,310 and \$43,175 respectively, a decrease of \$126,135.

At the annual meeting of the British Columbia Fruit Exchange, these officers were elected: E. Hutcherson, president; J. J. Howebent, vice-president; G. D. Brymner, treasurer. Mission City representatives, Messrs. Henry, Earl and Wren. Chilliwack, Messrs. Vedder and Sharp. Hammond, Messrs. Metcalf and Codd. New Westminster, Messrs. Brymner and Moggridge.

The Furness steamer "Damara," says the St. John *Sun*, will come back to St. John direct, leaving London on the 20th inst. and reaching here on the 5th prox at the latest. This is fully six days in advance of the date fixed for the opening of Parliament, and will enable the tea merchants of St. John to import all the tea they wish to bring in before the Government have a chance to put the duty on it.

City grain dealers are taking off their buyers from provincial markets, as deliveries have closed almost entirely. There are two causes for the non-delivery, the bad state of the roads and the disposition of farmers to hold for higher prices. Whatever may be the state of the markets, however, many farmers will sell before the roads break up in the spring, as their granaries are surrounded by such deep snow that a thaw might injure the wheat.—*Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 4th.

The grain shipments from the port of St. John, N.B., are this year much larger than in any previous year. The following table will show the increased movement during the past two months as compared with last year:

January, 1897.....	264,512 bushels.
" 1896.....	121,854 "
Total increase.....	142,658 "
December, 1896.....	185,222 "
" 1895.....	38,077 "
Total increase.....	147,145 "

INSURANCE ITEMS.

The superintendent of agencies for the Standard Life Assurance Company, Mr. J. Hutton Balfour, passed through Toronto last week, and had occasion to express satisfaction with the business of the company for 1896. Mr. Balfour, who is a native of Edinburgh, has been in the service of the Standard Life for a number of years.

—Every merchant should take some means to prevent the burning of his premises. Fire insurance can, at the most but imperfectly reimburse the merchant for the loss of his premises and goods by fire. The loss of time in clearing away ruins and rebuilding the store structure must remain without recompense. A successful merchant, in his efforts to build up and maintain a trade, must be always on the alert and cannot afford to receive the set-back occasioned by a fire. A few simple preventives—a ready supply of water, an organization of employees, may do much to avert serious loss.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Fire Insurance Company was held last week. This company, which is a Winnipeg one, shows a subscribed capital of \$370,000. Mr. J. H. Ashdown is president and Mr. F. W. Stobart vice-president. It takes credit for "getting fire insurance placed on a fairer basis," and the reduction of rates at certain points. It was able to declare a dividend of 6 per cent. and put something to reserve. The premiums of the year were about \$30,000 and the losses

paid \$4,139. The company's cash assets are \$59,190. So pleased with the report were some sanguine shareholders that they began talking of a Dominion charter and a general reduction of rates; but the directors are probably cooler-headed people, who have had, as merchants, some experience of fire risk.

We learn that Mr. H. V. Meredith, Montreal, manager of the Bank of Montreal, has been appointed Canadian director of the Standard Life Assurance Co., in succession to the late Sir Joseph Hickson. Mr. Meredith is a well known banker, and a desirable addition to the board. He is a cousin of Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice of Ontario.

CLEARING-HOUSE FIGURES.

The following are the figures of the Canadian clearing-houses for the week ended with Thursday, February 11th, 1897, compared with those of the previous week:

CLEARINGS.	Feb. 11.	Feb. 4.
Montreal	\$10,646,842	\$ 9,476,495
Toronto	6,615,711	6,698,210
Halifax	1,099,377	1,122,105
Winnipeg	1,204,786	1,024,173
Hamilton	628,044	826,252
St. John	621,915	462,405

\$20,816,675 \$19,609,640

Aggregate balances this week, \$2,962,592; last week, \$2,628,091.

—The following is a passage from the Lieut.-Governor's speech at the opening of the Ontario Legislature on Wednesday last. It shows that the subject of mining development and mining laws has been under consideration by the Provincial Government: "I rejoice to know that the past year has been one of growing activity in mining affairs. Furnaces for smelting iron, nickel and copper ores, and mills for reducing and refining gold ores, and for the treatment of other minerals, have been steadily operated. The known limits of gold-bearing country have been widened in different directions by the enterprising spirit of prospectors, and the work of development carried on in several new locations encourages the hope that in the year upon which we have entered, capital directed by experience will find useful and profitable employment. Indeed our province offers to investors, explorers and miners attractions scarcely equalled elsewhere, and I am gratified to know that its mineral wealth is receiving the earnest attention of our own people. Amendments to the mining laws, the necessity of which has been suggested by the experience of unusually active operations in the past year, will be submitted for your consideration, and in other ways you will be asked to give to our mining industries generous encouragement."

—In an article on debtors, and the array of them made by successive sales on credit, until the different buyers stand in a sort of dependent row, like a row of bricks on end, the fall of one against his neighbor being likely to fell the whole row, the *Age of Steel* says: "There is confessedly a scarcity of sentiment in business, but there is enough of faith to make a second Christendom." "Uncollected debts are responsible for many, and perhaps most of the break-downs in business, and to a larger extent, than is generally supposed, for trade demoralization and depression." No business can fatten on mythical assets, that journal goes on to argue, any more than a hungry man can dine on rainbows. But all these credits are not bad: not a few of them are left unpaid under the uncandid plea of hard times.

—Curious, if there is so much profit in fire insurance in Canada, as many people suppose, that company after company should retire from the field. Here is the Agricultural Insurance Company of Watertown, N.Y., established here many years, closing all its Canadian offices, re-insuring all its Canadian risks with the British American Insurance Company. The company closed out its business in Quebec over a year ago.

—The official programme of the thirty-seventh annual meeting of the Association of the Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom is issued. The meeting takes place on the 9th, 10th and 11th of March next, in the Whitehall rooms, Hotel Metropole, London. The chair is to be occupied by the Hon. Sir H. Stafford Northcote, Bart., C.B., M.P., the president.

—A despatch of Saturday last from Albany, N.Y., announces that Mr. J. F. Pierce, the superintendent of insurance for New York, has authorized the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Co. of New York to commence business as a joint fire insurance company. The company, it is stated, has a capital stock of \$200,000.