

This was equivalent to 61.2 cents per one hundred pounds of milk, or four cents below the average for five years.

Next to butter, there are two classes of farm products which show a notable increase. These are hogs and poultry. Of the former the total number was 1,640,787, being 355,824 more than the preceding year, while poultry of all kinds numbered 9,084,273, an increase of 648,932. These items form a noticeable share in the enlarged export of dead meats for the season.

The value of farm lands, which had for ten years previously been steadily depreciating, has now reached an upward turn. The aggregate value of all farm property increased from \$905,093,613 in 1897 to \$923,022,420 in 1898, while the item of farm lands increased in value from \$554,054,552 to \$556,246,569. The greatest increase took place in the value of live stock, which rose from \$93,649,804 to \$103,744,223, or almost ten per cent.

The rural assessed area of Ontario in 1898 was 23,392,584 acres, being 32,156 acres more than of 1897. Of this 12,993,614 acres was cleared land, an increase of 140,553 over the previous year. The percentage of cleared land was 55.5, there being 7,198,905 acres of woodland and 3,200,065 acres swamp or waste land. The acreage devoted to pasture was 2,708,043, an increase of 49,798 acres, a result of the growth of the dairying and stock raising interests. The area under crop was 8,835,272 acres, which exceeded the aggregate of any previous year and was 133,567 acres greater than that of 1897. We shall look with interest for the figures of the year now closing, which are reasonably sure to show a further increase.

BRANDON BOARD OF TRADE.

The following letter has been issued by the Board of Trade of Brandon, Manitoba:

Sir,—We beg to call your attention to the attitude of the railway companies towards the city of Brandon. The Board of Trade has been for two years trying to get our freight rate adjusted so that a jobbing business could be done from here, which the railway companies finally and flatly refuse to do. They advanced no argument justifying their position, other than that they do not propose to build up more than one jobbing centre in this country, notwithstanding President Shaughnessy's speech in Vancouver that such action would be a dangerous thing. And it certainly seems dangerous, for if railway companies are allowed to take the position we complain of, there is no town or city in Canada safe, as it would always be within their power to determine how much or how little business any particular place should do; which power should not be in the hands of any individual or corporation, especially railway corporations receiving enormous amounts of public aid. The business men of Brandon are not asking any favors, but we do want fair treatment, and to be placed on a proper basis to develop and extend the business that properly belongs to us. We solicit your interest and influence in our behalf.

W. A. MACHAFFIE, President,
K. CAMPBELL, Secretary.

Brandon, December 20th, 1899.

A CHANGE OF INSURANCE AGENCY.

We hear of a change in the Toronto agency of the Commercial Union Assurance Company, limited, to take effect on 1st January next. It is understood that on that date Mr. Richard Wickens, long and favorably known as the general agent, will retire from active connection with the company. It is many years since Mr. Wickens came to Canada from England, and after a few years in mercantile business in Quebec, he removed to Toronto in 1854, where he connected himself with the British America Assurance Co., whose office for many years was in the building the Monetary Times now occupies. In 1873 he took the general agency for Ontario of the Commercial Union, which company's business was at that time very small, and when in 1887 the head office of the company was removed to Montreal, Mr. Wickens retained the general agency for Toronto and county of York. During the fourteen years in which he had charge of the Ontario business, the premium income of the company had so increased, under his painstaking and judicious management, that it had become one of the largest of any fire office in the province. We are interested and pleased to learn

that the Head Office authorities in England, recognizing the valuable services rendered them by Mr. Wickens during the twenty-six years he served them, have made him a retiring annual allowance. The company is to be commended for so becoming an act, for Mr. Wickens has been an exemplary fire insurance man in many respects, in none more so, perhaps, than in the effort to maintain equitable rates, and to adhere to the established traditions of the profession.

His successor in the general agency of the company is Mr. George R. Hargraft, eldest son of the late William Hargraft, a widely respected merchant of Cobourg, Ont., in whose warehouse he received his first training. Entering the service of the Bank of Toronto, Mr. George Hargraft filled some important positions in its Toronto and Montreal offices, and ten years ago became city agent of the Commercial Union here. Since that time he has by close attention to business built up one of the largest insurance connections in Toronto. Mr. Hargraft has always been more or less identified with athletic sports. He is a prominent member of the Granite Club, having just completed his term of office as president of the curling club, and being vice-president of the lawn bowling club. He is also a member of the executive committee of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. It is natural that the Commercial Union should regret the loss of services so valuable as those of Mr. Wickens have been. But they are fortunate in possessing in his successor a capable and at the same time popular representative.

DOMINION COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

At the annual meeting in Montreal of the Dominion Commercial Travellers' Association, Mr. Maxwell Murdoch was elected president by a majority of 158 over Mr. J. T. LeSueur, the vote being 1,229 to 1,071. The other officers elected for 1900 were: For directors—Gus Harries, 1,073 votes; George A. Mann, 1,065; D. M. Lefebvre, 1,032; C. M. Mills, 950; J. C. Brims, 910; A. D. Gall, 863; J. F. L. Caron, 812; John Hughes, 801; P. Gauthier, 727; W. E. Dickson, 561. The first five named of these, with Messrs. W. Kearney, Charles Gurd, James Robinson, A. R. Colvin and G. Lefavre, will be directors for the ensuing year. As already reported, Mr. John E. Wright was elected vice-president, and Mr. T. L. Paton, treasurer, by acclamation.

The following loyal resolution was put and carried unanimously, the whole meeting joining in the National Anthem: "In view of the present crisis in the affairs of the British Empire, it is hereby resolved that any member of this association who may have gone or may volunteer for service in the army or navy of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, shall have all the privileges and benefits of this association continued to him during his time of enlisted service."

FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

New crop olives are going to be high.

Both molasses and syrups continue very firm.

The tea market in New York and abroad is firm, although transactions for the week in American markets are small.

Hops are quiet and steady in European markets, while quotations in New York are uncertain. Receipts up to 26th are barely half what they were for same period last year.

Refined sugars are still further down, another 5 cents reduction having taken place yesterday week. American refined is the cause, and this the Canadian makers seem determined to keep out.

Stocks of dried apricots, silver prunes, pears and plums on the American Pacific Coast are reported to be practically exhausted. A private letter says that 150 carloads will cover the entire stock of dried peaches left there.

A letter received by a prominent commission house from its correspondent in San Jose, Cal., says of the prunes situation on the Coast: "Estimated crop for season 1899-1900, 100,000,000 pounds. Reliable statistics show that over 27,500,000 pounds have already been shipped direct to Europe. Stock remaining on the Coast is fully estimated at 22,500,000 pounds, leaving a shipment for domestic consumption only 50,000,000 pounds, and,