

industry grew from 240,400,000 roubles of an output in 1880 to 430,218,000 roubles in 1897. Last year there were in operation in the empire 274 sugar factories, the acreage of land under beets was 1,346,071 acres, and the output of refined sugar was 1,180,293 tons. In 1895 it was only 684,721 tons, which shows a satisfactory rate of progress. In 1895 there were 38,544 flour mills in Russia and Poland, with a total production of 35,100 tons per day.

Coming to the consideration of the trade done by the Russian Empire it is very large, but of course by no means so much so when the size of the country and of its population are remembered. Briefly stated, the export of foodstuffs in 1902, was valued at 526,189,000 roubles; chiefly corn, flour, buckwheat, eggs, and dairy produce, timber, flax, oil cakes, etc.; of raw and half-manufactured goods, 258,267,000 roubles; of animals, 21,558,000 roubles; and manufactured goods, 19,263,000 roubles.

The imports for 1902 may be divided roughly into food, 81,409,000 roubles; raw and half-manufactured goods, 295,483,000 roubles; animals, 1,403,000 roubles; manufactured goods, 148,800,000 roubles. Among the chief of these may be mentioned raw cotton, metal goods, coal, wool, raw and in yarns, wines and spirits, tea, fish, machinery. The countries which take the larger quantity of Russia's exports are Germany, (203,596,000 roubles in 1902); United Kingdom, 188,775,000 roubles; Netherlands, 103,013,000 roubles; France, 55,158,000 roubles. The United States only took 4,413,000 roubles' worth. It may be worth noting that the Russian tariff is very high, and generally specific in its nature.

THE WATER PRESSURE IN MONTREAL.

We receive from Montreal a bitter complaint from a merchant in that city, of what he calls the despotic and disturbing action of the fire underwriters in putting up fire premiums within the congested district of Montreal, on all risks except dwellings. The congested district is bounded by the water front and Lagauchetiere streets on south and north, by Murray and St. Denis streets on west and east. The terms of the circular issued by the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association specify that:—

An extra of seventy-five cents (75c.) instead of twenty-five cents (25c.) as formerly must be added on and after this date to all ratings (annual and three year) in the Montreal Tariff Book (dwellings alone excepted) when risks are situated in the congested district defined on page 29a of the said Tariff.

The rates on special and scheduled risks situated within the congested district, the ratings for which have been published since the 25th January, 1901, have to be increased on and after this date by adding fifty cents (50c.) thereto, and to ratings issued prior to the 25th January, 1901, seventy-five cents (75c.).

Our correspondent demands to know when the business people of Montreal, "who are the people hit by this piece of arbitrariness of the insurance lords, are going to get a rest from being salted by the fire insurance companies." As we understand it, the underwriters have raised the rates because the city authorities of Montreal, who have time and again been warned as to the defects in that city's water

supply, etc., have not taken the requisite steps to have matters put right. The immediate cause of the present measure appears to be that a water famine might result any day from the defective equipment of the low level pumping station. It was stated last week, indeed, that the boilers at this station were liable to explode at any moment; but this we find from a report of Boiler Inspector Champagne, on Tuesday, is incorrect. Two batteries of the boilers, that is, six out of nine, Champagne considers "as safe as any in the city." But no steps had been taken to replace the other battery of three, condemned two years ago and never used since, and these boilers ought to be replaced at once as a reserve in case of explosion or other happening such as that of last winter when, as Superintendent Janin reminded the aldermen, "the river dropped so low that the turbine pumps could not be used very much. Then the boilers would have to be in use more." But the council has been dicker and dilly-dallying over the getting of new boilers for something like three months, and only this week, after the insurance rates had been raised, have they taken action by ordering three new Babcock and Wilcox boilers, at a cost of \$15,530.

People in Montreal, and indeed everywhere else, are apt to be too dilatory in dealing with fire-fighting appliances until a great fire comes. The inaction of the Montreal aldermen in the matter under notice is only one instance among many of the sort of delay that seems to become chronic whenever the stimulus to activity of a conflagration ceases. It is of no possible use to curse the underwriters for doing what they did to protect themselves. Our correspondent should curse the city aldermen rather, for trifling with the interests of the city.

THE NOVA SCOTIA STEEL AND COAL CO.

Further enquiry into the affairs of the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company convinces us that our informants as per our issue of 5th August were without sufficient warrant for describing its position and prospects as they did. In the one case this misinformation appears to have arisen from imperfect knowledge, but in the other case, we now conclude, from deliberate bad faith. Certain of the statements made, of which we quoted part, were untrue, some were true, and some others exaggerated. It is our duty, therefore, to say that the paragraph of fifteen lines on page 166 of our issue of August 5th, within quotation marks, ought not to have been printed. We further add an apology to the Board of Directors for having misrepresented their policy and their action.

Following up what was said in our issue of last week, we find that the amount at which the Ferrona plant originally stood on the books of the company was \$326,019. This was written down at different times until the sum at which it stands on the books to-day is only \$86,734. Thus the "one million loss" on this property, which our correspondent claimed, is a myth. Again, the coal mines at Coalburn, known to the company as the Marsh mine, cost originally \$87,300; in 1902 there was written off it \$13,000, odd; and it stands to-day on the company's books at \$74,-