

COTTON ESTIMATES.

An article compiled from the detailed reports of correspondents all over the Southern states appears in The New York Chronicle. The tabulated statement shows a net decrease compared with 1897 of 0.45 per cent., making the total 21,956,840 acres in 1898, against 22,056,792 acres in 1897. Its conclusions are as follows:

"Acreage has decreased. Less land in cotton is clearly in evidence in sections where the land is poor, and also where diversification of crops is possible; from this extreme the tendency grades down to nil or further than that, to an inclination in the opposite direction (that is to an increase) in the sections where the soil is richer. For illustration, along the Atlantic States we find both poor land and other crops interfering with cotton production. Corn, wheat, tobacco have all received added attention. Likewise, to a small extent, the cold, backward rainy spring which has been experienced this year in sections of those States has interfered with seeding. But when we turn to the Gulf States and to the rich delta of the Mississippi and its tributaries, or when we examine the returns from Texas, where wheat and corn equally with cotton, as may suit the occasion, can be raised to so great advantage, we find not a large increase but a small increase in cotton planting. The truth is, that although there was the past season, a margin of profit to the many in cotton sold on the plantation at 5c. a pound, it was a narrow one, a margin inclining one not to be reckless but conservative. As a consequence of this variation in influences working in different sections, we have additions in some States and reductions in others so nearly offsetting one another that the net decrease is very small—less than 1 per cent. As to maturity the crop is unquestionably a late one. Cultivation has been attended to all through the season. Condition of the plant in the Atlantic States is spotted. In some districts it appears to be very promising, while in others the reports are not favorable."

NEW ROADS AND PROJECTS.

Foley Bros., the St. Paul railroad contractors, have secured a contract from the Canadian Pacific Railway to build another strip of the Crow's Nest Pass line between Robson and Midway, British Columbia, a distance of 105 miles. The contract amounts to \$3,000,000. The new branch in the West Kootenay country will make a complete line from Lethbridge, Alberta territory, to Midway. The line now ends at Kootenay lake, which is navigable a large part of the year. From Nelson on the west end of the lake is a completed line to Robson. The company will after the completion of the new branch have to build only from Midway to Pentiction and thence to Hope on the main line to complete another grand transcontinental route, considerably shorter and more valuable than the present main line route. Locally the new branch will be invaluable as it penetrates a rich mining country, including the most important sections of the Boundary creek and Kettle river. This contract closed by the St. Paul contractors in connection with Peter Larson, of Helena, Mont., includes the grading, bridging, laying of ties and tracks and surfacing of the entire line, and will require twelve months of hard work. The estimated cost of \$3,000,000 includes the bridging of a branch of the Columbia river at Grand Forks at the foot of Christian lake and the junction of Kettle river, a difficult and expensive piece of engineering. The Kettle river will also be bridged at Midway.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

The Dominion government has decided to grant to Mackenzie & Mann a fiat to test in the Exchequer Court their claim for damages in connection with their provisional contract to build a railway to the

Yukon, the bill for which was killed by the Senate. Vancouver advices state that Mackenzie & Mann have notified the Provincial legislature that, owing to the action of the Federal government, they will not accept the offer of \$4,000 a mile for the Yukon Railway, as proposed by the British Columbia legislature.—Railway & Engineering Journal.

BICYCLE INSURANCE A FAILURE.

From all appearances the bicycle insurance company, which was so numerous about two years ago, is a thing of the past, and has gone to join the ranks of the insurance organizations long since dead which undertook to protect against burglaries, loss of situation and other peculiar ills to which the human race is liable. All of the above mentioned have passed out of existence, not from the common cause, the lack of patronage, but because of positive carelessness and oftentimes absolute dishonesty of those whom they intended to protect. Several years ago, when the first insurance company was organized to protect bicycles against loss by theft, offering to duplicate the stolen wheel at the expiration of a certain time, and in the meantime loan the loser a wheel, all for the sum of \$2, the riders of this country were rather skeptical, but it soon became apparent that the concern was honest in its intentions, and a thriving business was worked up. Other concerns started up, and the bicycle insurance business became a factor in the industry. Then the spirit of dishonesty crept in and losses became alarmingly frequent. Unscrupulous riders had their wheels insured and then either hired some one to steal them or else allowed them to remain for hours at a time in public places, where they would present a ready chance for anyone who felt inclined to secure a wheel free of charge. The natural result was that the insurance companies which were not over honest made a practice of dodging their obligations at every possible chance, while those officials who valued their reputations were obliged to pay up and look pleasant. The failure of one or two of the largest concerns about a year ago gave a black eye to the business, but it was not until very recently that the last of the bicycle insurance companies passed out of existence by reason of a rigid enforcement of the insurance laws requiring companies to make large deposits with their home state governments.—Cleveland Cycling Gazette.

TORONTO SEEN FROM A DISTANCE.

Among the evidence of Toronto's recovered prosperity mentioned in the city treasurer's report for 1897, are the prompt payment of taxes, a distinct revival in the building trade, a decrease in the number of vacant houses and shops, an increase in the water services, and a falling off in the quantity of land sold for non-payment of assessments. The building permits for 1898 issued up to the beginning of this month were in excess of the whole issued in 1896. Toronto had a boom of the most aggravated kind, beginning ten years ago and it has taken a long time and some courage to get over its effects. Three and three-quarter millions were cut off the assessment values last year, and that was only the finishing of a process. It seems to have brought things to a rock bottom, though, and probably increases will henceforward be the rule, and the sign of renewed healthy growth.—Montreal Gazette.

—The total deal shipments to Europe from St. John in 1897 were 244,169,459 sup. ft., in 192 vessels; and to the United States and other foreign countries 96,752,000 sup. ft.—a grand total of lumber shipments for the year of 340,921,459 ft., valued at \$3,938,401.

A GOOD CUSTOMER.

Japan is a splendid customer in United States markets. The little Japs have bought of us in the last twelve months 12,000 tons of steel rails; also 90 locomotives and 180,000 bales of cotton. This importation of American cotton broke all previous records in this line. Japan also buys large quantities of American lumber. Owing to the frequent occurrence of earthquakes in the land of Geisha, stone and brick houses are uncommon, and there is a growing demand for building lumber, which is being largely supplied by the United States. Those in the west, of course, have the larger share of this trade. Japan has 55,000,000 people, who are every day copying more and more closely European and American ideas of building.

HIS ADVERTISEMENT.

There was a man in our town,
Who wasn't otherwise;
He started into business,
But didn't advertise.
Of course there is a moral
Connected with the tale;
He runs an advertisement now—
It's headed "Sheriff's Sale."
—Chicago News.

SOLILOQUY OF OUR GERMAN ADJUSTER.

Dot hustle vas yust der dings to chase dose blues mit.

Ton't go on der obinion dot er odder mans vas nodings much, und it vas you know it all alretty. Somedimes dot mans vas so shmaradt like you.

Hardt dimes shtay aroundt all der vile mit der lazy mans.

Der pottle vas goot to haf for dot baby, put der mans maype can gedt along midout it.

Aindt id funny dot yust dose dings vat you vant some odder blace vas mit you rightd avay?

Ohf you ledt von minute gedt losdt ven you somedings do, maype dot vas yust der rightd minute ven you vant to do id.—Insurance Monitor.

—The amendment which imposes a tax of 10 cents a pound on tea coming into the United States was passed against the votes of nearly all the Protectionists of the Senate. But why, asks The Record, should not a duty be imposed on coffee as well as on tea. A tax of three cents a pound on coffee would yield a revenue of nearly if not quite \$20,000,000—almost as much as is obtained from the protective schedules of duties on textile fabrics in the Dingley tariff.

—The annual meeting of the Canada Eastern Railway took place last week at Fredericton, N.B. The following directors were elected: Alex. Gibson, H. H. McLean, F. E. Winslow, Alex. Gibson, jr., Alfred Rowley, James Gibson and Chas. Hatt. At a subsequent meeting of the directors Mr. Gibson was re-elected president and G. F. Gregory, Q.C., secretary.

—Mr. D. D. Mann, of Mackenzie & Mann, railway contractors, admits, according to a Vancouver despatch, that his firm has obtained the contract for building the railway from Robson to Pentiction. The exact date for commencing operations, however, is not fixed.

—A wooden version of Longfellow's "Excelsior": Teacher (to class)—"In this stanza, what is meant by the line, 'The shades of night were falling fast'?" Bright Scholar—"The people were pulling down the blinds."

—A glass firm in the States lately received an order for 500 glass fence posts, to be of the usual size, and grooved for the reception of wire.