

Prominent Topics.

Winnipeg's World's Fair.

According to a newspaper dispatch a deputation has arrived at Ottawa with the object of interviewing the Premier and asking a grant of \$2,500,000 for the proposed World's Fair in 1914. Winnipeg people have only one fault. That is, they are too modest.

Smoke Nuisance in Montreal.

We would like to know if there is any city on earth where the smoke nuisance is greater than in Montreal. On Wednesday last St. James Street was simply suffocating, between smoke and soot. Surely this should be prevented. In other cities contractors and others would be compelled to use hard coal.

Forest Fires in the West.

Again come heart-breaking stories of forest fires in the West. This time in Minnesota and Manitoba. A thousand people are said to be killed or missing on the American side, and 2,500 square miles of timber have been destroyed. The loss of life and property on the Canadian side of the border, while considerable, is much smaller, but sympathy in such cases is not bounded by political lines. There is only one practical lesson in these frequent disasters, and that is that more money and more thought must be spent in the prevention of forest fires. No country in the world has so much to lose as Canada from this cause and therefore no country should be prepared to devote more energy and expenditure to the work.

Asiatic Cholera in the Western World.

One authenticated case of Asiatic cholera has turned up in London and being promptly recognized and properly treated in hospital may well be the last. Cholera is an infectious disease, but it is also a dirt disease and can be largely guarded against by the ordinary sanitary precautions, which are essential to public health under normal conditions. Perhaps because familiarity breeds contempt, Asiatic cholera does not create as great panic in the countries where it originates as it does in the western world. The last time there was a cholera scare on this continent, the late Sir Edwin Arnold, who was familiar with the disease in its home, in conversation with the writer, ridiculed the panic into which the western hemisphere had been thrown by fear of a "tummy ache." All the same, experience shows the necessity of precaution when cholera threatens. Not so much at quarantine, because cholera has a fatal facility for dodging the inspectors, but in abolishing the conditions ashore which favour its development. It is a scavenger disease, and its approach is a warning to clean up. The community which ignores the warning will suffer. In Canada we have ample

time to prepare for the enemy, because cholera cannot thrive in a Canadian winter.

The Portuguese revolution is evidently *un fait accompli* and the formal recognition of the republic by Great Britain is only a matter of a few days. The religious orders which were one of the causes of the rebellion are being driven into exile, and seem to have difficulty in finding any Catholic country in Europe willing to afford them a permanent home. The Italian Government has taken measures to prevent them settling in Italy and the Spanish Government while offering them temporary hospitality announces that it will not tolerate a permanent invasion by the orders. The new Portuguese Government is showing a disposition to respect the property rights of the orders, of the royal family and of the aristocracy and will gain in respect abroad by so doing. The King and the Queen Mother will probably reside in the old refuge of exiled European monarchs and anarchists—in England.

Railway Strike in France.

It is remarkable how workmen who are constantly asking for legislation to ameliorate their condition, habitually set the law at defiance whenever they take concerted action. On Tuesday 40,000 to 50,000 railway employes in France went on strike, and their first step was to cut the telegraph wires. It is also reported that an express train was held up and rails torn up. The whole service between Paris and Germany, Belgium, Holland and England is demoralized, and because the railway companies have not agreed to increase the wages of certain employes from sixty cents to \$1 a day, the whole country is rudely taken by the throat. All northern France is suddenly under military rule. Soldiers guard the lines, the locomotives, the stations and the coal depots, and thousands of innocent by-standers are prevented from travelling.

An interesting suggestion was made by President Pearson in his address before the American Bankers' Convention at Los Angeles that bankers should develop a proper method of ascertaining the cost basis for handling various transactions. Manufacturers reduce to the smallest fractions the cost of each operation in producing goods, while, bankers, in the opinion of President Pearson, have too long been prone to lump expenses and income and take chances on coming out with a profit. The expense end of any other modern business is under careful supervision, and in President Pearson's judgment, if bankers were to work on a proper cost basis, as well as transit costs, they would not only find their analysis departments would reveal opportunities to insure amazing savings, but would be less eager to offer unusual inducements to secure new business.