

Events of the Week

CANADIAN.

Pembroke, Ont., was damaged by fire to the extent of half a million dollars on Nov. 4th.

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A creamery is being organized at Swan River, Manitoba.

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Ten laborers were killed by dynamite explosions on the National Transcontinental in the vicinity of Kenora, Ont., last week.

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W. L. Mackenzie King, M. P. will represent Canada at the international quinquennial conference in Peking, China, next January on the suppression of the opium traffic.

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The Baptist Church of Canada in conference at Ottawa formed last week a federal administrative body with a constitution and with certain well defined subjects to come under its purview.

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Arrangements have been made for the building of another big elevator at Port Arthur. It will have a capacity of 1,500,000 bushels, will cost approximately \$500,000, and will be ready to handle next year's crop.

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A company with a capitalization of two and a half millions has been formed in North Dakota with the avowed intention of colonizing five hundred thousand acres of land in the northwest in the neighborhood of Vermilion, Alta. It is proposed to work the land entirely with English labor and as a single enterprise.

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An English immigrant at St. John, N. B. guilty of theft will be sent back to England on the first steamer. The judge refused to sentence him on conviction stating that it would be cheaper to ship the prisoner back than to pay \$150 a year for his maintenance in the penitentiary.

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Among the birthday honors announced in honor of the King's birthday are the following to Canadians: E. S. Clouston, of Montreal, baronetcy; General P. H. N. Lake, Ottawa, knight commander of St. Michael and St. George; Brig.-Gen. D. A. Macdonald, of Ottawa, commander of St. Michael and St. George; Hugh Graham, Montreal, knight bachelor.

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The heaviest fall business on record is being done this year at Port Arthur and Fort William. September and October of this year both far exceeded in tonnage unloaded the corresponding months of 1907. By October 20 of this year the tonnage was equal to the whole of October, 1907, while the total for the month exceeded the total for the month last year by 3,700 tons. Work this year in freight handling will be found by the close of navigation to have surpassed all former years by thousands of tons.

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The receipts of grain over the C. P. R. from Sept. to Oct. 31 inclusive were as follows: Wheat 11,552,883.10 bushels; oats, 1,589,200.00 bushels; barley, 397,182.05 bushels; flax, 195,568.09 bushels. Total 13,734,833.54 bushels.

Receipts over the C. N. R. for the same time at Port Arthur; Wheat, 7,113,712 bushels; oats, 828,184.14 bushels; barley, 597,739.19 bushels. Total, 8,553,984.83 bushels.

Shipments from Port Arthur and Fort William from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31 inclusive were: Wheat, 13,649,084.40 bushels; barley, 388,687.20 bushels; flax, 86,323.

During the last few days about eighty cars of wheat have been shipped from the local yards all rail to West St. John in addition to the ordinary shipment.

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The customs revenue of the Dominion for October shows a considerably smaller falling off as compared with last year than has been in the case for six or seven months past indicating that the expected revival in trade is beginning to be felt in the increasing orders for imported goods.

For the month the customs revenue was \$4,316,473 as compared with \$4,930,031 for October of last year a decrease of \$613,558. For the first seven months of the present fiscal year the customs revenue has totalled \$27,179,191, a decrease of \$9,163.57.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN.

William Howard Taft of Ohio, was elected President of the United States on Nov. 3rd by a majority of eighty electoral votes over W. J. Bryan, his Democratic opponent.

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Serious rioting has occurred at Hong Kong resulting from an attempt of those involved to force local Chinese merchants to boycott Japanese goods. Merchants who refuse to boycott are being branded as traitors by having their ears slit.

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It is believed that the Bond government in Newfoundland has been defeated in the elections held on the Island last week. While complete returns are not yet in it would seem that the result at best is a tie. The campaign was one of the keenest fought out for some years.

While plowing at Monteleone, Calabria, a peasant found recently a Grecian gold coin weighing two grammes. On one side of the coin is a female head. It is said to be the rarest and best preserved specimen known.

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An antique sword, said to have been worn by Oliver Cromwell, will be put up at auction in New York, and sold to the highest bidder, unless John D. Rockefeller, to whom the weapon was sent, will come forward and pay the duty on it.

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The employees of Sir Christopher Furness, Hartlepool, England, who four weeks ago were given to understand that unless they could work without further trouble in the way of strikes, the iron and shipbuilding plants in which they were employed would be closed down, have reached an agreement among themselves and with their employers by which for one year a profit sharing scheme will be tried. The men will receive a share of the profits from the business instead of their regular wages. This is one of the most extensive profit sharing schemes ever tried.

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Kentucky tobacco growers who succeeded in protecting their crops from the "night riders," raised tobacco, housed and cured it under guard are receiving the highest price for their product ever paid for tobacco in the state. The "night riders" as they are called, are the field force of the tobacco growers' association which is an organization formed to break up the tobacco trust. Independent growers who remained outside the organization had their crops destroyed, barns burned and even in some cases were shot down when they resisted the gangs going about destroying property.

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A serious state of affairs has developed between France and Germany out of the Casablanca matter which will require delicate handling to be satisfactorily settled. While there is little danger of hostilities resulting from the strained relations of the two countries the position of both countries is rather delicate. France has refused to release some German deserters who are the cause of the trouble or express regret for the occurrence. It is believed that Germany is endeavoring to make the most of this affair which is of small importance to divert attention from the embarrassing position she was placed in by the Kaiser's now famous interview re his attitude during the Boer war, an interview that created something of a sensation in official Europe.

Scottish Commissioners Express Their Views

The *London Times* in an article published in its columns recently gives what it claims to be an epitome of the report which the Scottish Agricultural Commission will prepare when they are able to get at it. The Commission only arrived home last week but already seems to be exuding information about this country. One point of interest in the report is the importance given by the London journal to the finding of the commissioners that modern scientific methods have been found in Canada and that in every province there are men even among the small farmers, who use all sorts of labor-saving machinery, and who have already imbibed much of the scientific knowledge diffused from the agricultural colleges and experimental farms. It is interesting further to note that "investigations of Canadian climate generally resolves itself into an inquiry into the length and effects of winter." The same old story, you see. The British public has labored so long in the delusion that this is the land of polar night and eternal snow, that there is not much use in trying to get them away from the idea, but that a party of intelligent agriculturists should be looking for winter in the middle of August seems scarcely believable. Yet the *Times* speaks very much as though they were.

Among other industries the commissioners were impressed with the possibilities of horse and sheep raising. "There is a fortune in horses" one commissioner remarked, "especially to the man who takes advantage of the present stage of Western development. Sheep raising is an industry which the commissioner regards as worthy of encouragement. Considerable areas in the Maritime provinces and other parts of Canada, of little use for other kinds of farming, are admirably adapted for this. The meat is first-rate, and there is no lack of markets; but the commissioners were astonished to find the dog nuisance so severe as effectively to discourage the keeping of flocks.

There is a general impression among the commissioners that Canada offers plenty of opportunities to the small farmer who finds it hard to pay rent and keep his head above water in the old country; though the particular province to be recommended according to the taste as well as the means of the individual. The western homestead system is not an ideal one, in the opinion of, at any rate, some of the commissioners, who are inclined to consider 160 acres rather too small an area; but that, after all, is larger than the average farm in the eastern provinces, and many a homesteader buys additional land adjoining his free grant. If a man can command £200, or still better £300, he can make a very good start as a

prairie wheat-grower, or—and this would appeal more strongly to the average old countrymen—as a mixed farmer in the beautiful park lands. The commissioners, however, emphatically agree with the advice given by all who have investigated this subject, that an intending purchaser should spend some time in the country before carrying out his intention.

The position of a good Scottish farm laborer, earning about £40 a year, with meal and milk and other privileges, including perhaps that of free lodging in a tenement, is not contemptible, and there are men of that class who contrive to save the greater part of their wages; but their future is not brilliant, and they will doubtless continue to emigrate in large numbers to Canada, where they can go on saving money and presently start as small farmers on their own account. There is, however, a feeling that Canadian farmers in general will need, if they are to lessen the difficulty of obtaining an efficient and sufficient supply, to follow the example of the minority of their colleagues who give 12 months (instead of seasonal) agreements and provide cottages for married employees.

The Diminishing Rainfall of the Earth

Man since the earliest ages has loved to speculate on how the earth was going to end. One of the earliest theories was that it was going to be burnt up. Then there was the theory that cold temperatures, not intense heat, would blot out life on the planet. This theory was based upon the fact that the polar regions had at one time a tropical climate as indicated by animal and vegetable remains found in that quarter, and that at one time it was the most habitable region on the globe. Other theories have been that the air would all disappear from around the planet, that carbon-dioxide gas in the atmosphere would increase to such an extent that life would be impossible for the more highly organized animals, and there were other theories as well. But now comes a French meteorologist, G. Guilbert, who tells us that decreasing annual rainfall, year by year, or cycle by cycle, will ultimately bring about such a condition of affairs that vegetables and animals will be unable to live upon the planet. He writes:

The progressive diminution of rainfall is a fact that is becoming better established, and even universally known. As meteorological observations are perfected and prolonged, the phenomenon is more and more certain and forces it upon our notice.

Besides the Calvados commission which noted it in 1894, and many others since, the Meteorological Commission of Meurthe-et-Moselle has just made an important contribution to the study of this question which is so important for the future of the whole globe.

The learned secretary of this commission, Mr. Millot, professor of meteorology in the Faculty of Sciences at Nancy, has analyzed the results of 30 years of observation and gives the following as the average rainfalls for five-year periods at Nancy:

Years	Millimetres	Years	Millimetres
1878-1882	896.1	1893-1897	680.5
1883-1887	794.0	1898-1902	688.9
1888-1892	760.4	1903-1907	628.1

This diminution of rain at Nancy is truly impressive; it is even more rapid than that at Calvados. While the rainfall passes here from an average of 896.1 to 628.1, or a diminution of 268 millimetres, the corresponding years at St. Honorine-du-Fay show only a decrease of 157.3. The extraordinary importance of the figures noted at Nancy causes Mr. Millot to say that "if the rainfall should continue to decrease in the same proportion, before the end of the century France would become another Sahara, without its heat," but he adds: "Is the dryness going to increase indefinitely? We may reassure ourselves on this point. We have to do here only with oscillations of somewhat long periods which appear in all natural phenomena. In nature everything vibrates, everything oscillates, the molecule as well as the ocean, and the more the rainfall decreases the nearer will come the time when it will begin to increase. Perhaps this is not far distant."

Nothing could be truer. The rainfall cannot go on decreasing constantly at this speed. It is certain that a natural law should bring about a rainy period after a dry period. Without this oscillatory phenomenon, as Professor Millot well says, France would be a Sahara before another century. But even admitting this periodic oscillation, we may nevertheless affirm, basing our statement on both the universality and continuation of the observations, that the diminution of rainfall is a persistent and progressive phenomenon, which nothing has checked since the origin of rain on the globe, at least since the glacial period, and which nothing will modify in the future.

More rain certainly may fall in the next 30 years than is falling during the present period, but the following period will be drier yet. Thus, even with oscillations, be they of 30 year or of 100 year periods, the rain will continue to diminish century by century as it has always done over the whole globe since prehistoric times.

Perhaps the development of civilization has contributed to this diminution of rain, but only in very slight degree. In an equally small degree is it within the power of men to delay the progressive drying up of our planet. Reforestation, especially on hills, is al-