

of English and Australian were over 112,000 tons less in 1898, than in the year previous. This deficiency was almost entirely made good by the increase from British Columbia of about 98,000 tons.

THE HOG PACKING INDUSTRY.

The hog packing industry is not among the least important in Toronto. In addition to the concerns which undertake hog killing and their manufacture into products, there is the important winter packing trade which confines itself to the cutting and preparation of dressed hogs for the market. This latter mode of packing is by many considered not economical, and predictions have been made that it must shortly disappear before the competition of the packers who operated upon live hogs. The results of the present year are not, however, calculated to confirm this contention. The receipts of dressed hogs have been heavier than for years past, and it is estimated that fully 75,000 dressed hogs will have been turned into products before the season has closed. This represents an output valued at \$700,000 to \$750,000. Although the annual receipts of dressed hogs at Toronto are usually large, several causes have contributed to more than average deliveries this year. Farmers received last year good prices for hogs and have turned increased attention to the industry. The packers of live hogs have recently become very severe in their selection of hogs and many farmers have preferred to kill their own hogs, being assured of a fair price for the round lot.

As a result of the larger receipts the average price paid for dressed hogs this year has been 40 to 50 cents per cwt. less than a year ago. Although the total pack of pork products has been large, much of the increase has been in export cuts, and with the improved demand in the home market the pack suitable to the Canadian market should not be in excess of its requirements. The above account of production is of course confined to the winter packers. In a large Toronto live hog packing concern the pack to March 1st is expected to amount to 300,000 hogs, a large proportion of the output being exported to the United Kingdom. It will be seen that the live hog packing industry is of much more importance than that of winter packing, and although the latter will doubtless be continued for many years, the tendency of the trade favors the factory that conducts all the processes of preparing hogs for the market.

MUNICIPAL INSURANCE AGAIN.

Some people in Pictou are advocating municipal fire insurance and trying to get the New Glasgow folk to approve it. A committee from the Pictou County Farmers' Association discussed the matter with municipal councillors some days ago. Some of the former said that \$5 a year per \$1,000 was too heavy a tax, and this was the reason so many farmers in the Maritime Provinces were uninsured. They thought the municipality should back an insurance scheme "and make it secure." The municipality would not be asked to undertake the risk until the insurance amounted to sufficient to carry it on successfully, say, \$250,000. The expense would only be nominal, say, \$400 a year. Two other speakers followed in the same line, and considered that the municipality should at best "do this much for the farmers." Exactly, the county is to take the risk, which the farmers will not. Warden Fraser, however, asked pertinently, why, if there was money in the scheme, why should not the farmers themselves form a company? "If they were as sanguine as they appeared

to be, there would be no risk whatever. He thought the matter beyond the jurisdiction of the municipality, and said such schemes are usually looked on in too sanguine a manner." Mr. E. M. McDonald, M.P.P., gave it as his opinion, and we agree with him, that Parliament would hardly grant the municipality the powers to carry on municipal insurance as outlined.

TRADE WITH THE WEST INDIES.

The Government at Ottawa has recently received some very interesting letters from the British West Indies which bear upon the possibility of the extension of Canadian trade with those islands. A letter from Mr. Edgar Tripp, Canadian agent in Trinidad, to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, mentions a resolution before the Chamber of Commerce and Agricultural Society there in which suggestions are made including the engagement of special representatives of Canadian firms to handle their affairs, the improvement of direct steamship communication, the providing of cold storage facilities on vessels, more extended advertising by the circulation of Canadian market reports, etc., the securing of lower cable rates, the establishment of permanent trade exhibits, the better adjustment of the respective tariffs and better banking arrangements between the countries. Mr. Tripp says he has no hesitation in expressing the confident belief that a well-managed agency of a Canadian bank there would not only most materially assist in promoting trade with the Dominion and also between the Dominion and Venezuela, but would be a source of considerable profit to the proprietors.

A letter from a private dealer in Barbadoes which comes enclosed in the report from Trinidad, says of the prospect of developing trade between that colony and Canada: "The idea of taking any action likely to result in closer trade and other relations between this colony and the Dominion of Canada is one that has not caught on here, and up to the present nothing has been done to encourage the growth of the little intercourse which already exists through the efforts of Canada alone. Anything likely to disturb relations with the United States is not entertained." The Canadian commercial agent at Antigua reports that "on Nov. 29 our local government raised the duty on dry fish by four shillings per cask; on flour, one shilling and fourpence per barrel, and on spirits, i.e., whiskey, brandy and gin (excluding rum), fourpence per gallon. The duty on pickled fish, potatoes and smoked herrings remains as at present. Merchants and dealers have protested very strongly against this increase, which while it must be largely borne by the purchasers, will also have the effect of reducing the consumption."

ONTARIO LEAF TOBACCO.

In our issue of 20th January a correspondent in Essex county referred to the sending of samples of home-grown leaf tobacco from that county to England, and to the probability of an English agent being sent out to make purchases of leaf in Canada. From a despatch of 31st January we find that such an agent has arrived in Kingsville, Ontario. Mr. N. J. King, representing one of the largest tobacco brokers' firms of England, arrived at that place last Sunday. He wants at least 2,000,000 pounds of Essex county tobacco, and if samples are satisfactory will secure a large part of the Kent county crop. The circumstance affords room for hope that still another article has been found of Canadian production for which market may be found in the United Kingdom.

TIN AND COPPER VALUES.

The feature of the metal market is the phenomenal advances that have recently been made in tin and copper. In the local trade tin bars are quoted at 32 cents and ingot 30 cents per pound. This rise in price is due largely to the manipulation in primary markets of the syndicate which controls the supplies, and the advance is altogether out of proportion to the shortage in tin supplies, as a British contemporary remarks: "It is once more demonstrated that a few wealthy men can