

auctioneer, Toronto, offers to compromise at 50 cents; J. Marsh, general dealer, Trenton, at 40 cents in 4, 8 and 12 months secured; Mrs. Mary McPherson, boots and shoes, London, at 50 cents; W. B. Hartill, furniture dealer, Toronto, at 35 cents; and Boyle & Gardner, confectioners, Toronto, at 50 cents. The offer of the latter has been refused. A meeting of the creditors of Crawford, James & Co., Toronto, who lately failed in the provision trade, has been held. The firm were desirous of going into bankruptcy, and one of the members seconded a motion to that effect. As this was illegal, the creditors resisted and adjourned proceedings to afford an opportunity for arranging a composition. They have offered 25 cents on the dollar. The bullfinch is in possession of the business of Jos. Lussier, soda water manufacturer, Waterloo, P. Q., and of Nixon & Co., hides, etc., Toronto. The senior partner of the latter firm holds a lucrative appointment in the north-west, and his son carries on the business. It is not the first time they have been in difficulties. There are a few minor changes among small dealers.

—An excellent paper can be made out of the white ends of asparagus, which consist entirely of tough vegetable fibres. The material is adapted to the production of the finer kinds of writing paper.

—\$500,000,000 are annually spent in the United States for drink. How many delinquent newspaper subscriptions does this sum contain? It is heartless to spend in the maddening cup what you owe the printer. He may be thirsty himself.

—It is estimated that 20,000 oil wells have thus far been dug in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, at an aggregate cost of \$192,000,000. They have yielded about eighty-eight million barrels of oil, valued at the wells at three hundred millions of dollars, or four hundred millions of dollars at the seaboard.

—The total nominal capital invested in all the railways of Great Britain is nearly \$3,200,000,000. This is at the rate of \$200,000 per mile of railway opened. More than \$190,000,000 of capital pay no dividend; \$270,000,000 less than five per cent. and only \$25,000,000 more than ten per cent.

—An influential meeting of policy-holders in the Niagara District Mutual Insurance Company was held in Sherbrooke recently, at which it was resolved that the Eastern Townships policy-holders should retain leading counsel and contest any claim for the collection of premium notes. They also resolved that in case of being compelled by the courts to pay any portion of the premium notes, to take proceedings personally against the directors for soliciting new business after the Company was known to be insolvent.

—Lake Superior mining news is encouraging. The Silver Islet mine is working a large force, and has already sent down 40 barrels of rich silver. The same vein, full of mineral, has been discovered on the mainland. The Duncan mine shows a wonderful improvement in the deposits from the diamond drill prospecting. The Q. A. mine is showing well. What a pity so many of these valuable mines have been allowed to pass out of our hands!

A CHANCE FOR INVENTORS.—Inventors have the opportunity offered them to secure a valuable prize. For a new process to extract the juice of the sugar cane, at a cost not exceeding 40 per cent. of the product, the Council General of Guadeloupe offer a reward of \$20,000, the descriptions to be submitted by the 1st of June, 1880.

—The report of the Montreal City Passenger Railway shows the business of the Company for this year and last to be.—For year ending 1st Oct., 1876, revenue, \$138,052.45, working expenses, \$134,022.97; for year ending 1st Oct., 1877, revenue, \$167,998.15, working expenses, \$139,413.84. A circular of the secretary of the Kingston Street Railway states that the construction of the road has cost nearly \$36,000, and the gross earnings from May 12 to October 20 are \$7,132.52, a very large business for a new railway. A dividend of four per cent. for the half year has been declared on the capital stock.

—Steamboat navigation on the Red River northward is closed for the season, navigation beginning with the 1st of April, 1877, and ending 31st of October, 1877. The total amount of domestic articles exported from the United States to Manitoba and Northwestern Canada from April 1st to October 31st was \$754,000; imported into the United States from Manitoba and the Northwest, \$512,000; bonded imports passed through from Manitoba to Eastern Canada, \$166,000; estimated value of Eastern Canadian goods, bonded through to Manitoba and the Canadian Northwest, \$2,000,000. These figures show a vast increase all round. The imports from Manitoba to the United States are chiefly buffalo robes and furs.

—The misfortunes attending the navigation of the St. Lawrence between this city and Quebec this season have been so numerous, and of such a disastrous and apparently preventable character, as to draw forth comment not only here, but in journals published in New York and other rivals of the trade of Montreal. A New York authority chuckles over the prospective increase of marine insurance on this route, and the feeling of dislike among shipowners to send large class steamships here at all. The Harbor Commissioners have also wakened up to the fact that the late serious accidents are very damaging to the port. Prompt action should be taken to prevent diversion of trade from the St. Lawrence route. New Orleans is making a "big push" to secure a greater volume of trade for the Mississippi route. Let us see that it is not done at our expense.

THE PROSPECTS OF FIJI.—Mr. Gorrie, the Chief Justice of Fiji, has addressed an entertaining letter to his friend, Mr. T. B. Potter, on this youngest of the British colonies. He says people at home have not the slightest idea what a magnificent colony it is, or how interesting it might be for rich men in London and Manchester if they would only go out and have a look at it. Its list of exports is already more than respectable for a group of islands in their third year of British sovereignty, and with the unmitigated cannibal still flourishing on them. Copra—the dried kernel of the cocoanut—would alone give promise of a handsome trade. It is largely shipped to Sydney and direct to Ham-

burg. The sugar plantations on the Vita Levu—the largest island—are already growing enough to employ two crushing mills, which are worked on co-operative principles. There is room for seventy mills, says the Chief Justice, on the river Rewa alone, and where the Crown land grants are all out there will be occupation for over two hundred mills. Fiji cotton had a high reputation in Lancashire a few years ago, but it did not pay as it was then grown. It is now being raised on sounder financial principles, and answering well. Mr. Gorrie tells us that the only thing wanted is capital. Good securities go a-begging at 10 per cent., and the Bank rate is treble ours.

ACCIDENTS ON THE RIVER.

A short time ago the satisfactory announcement was made by the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal that thenceforward every case of accident or collision on the river would be thoroughly investigated. In common with, we believe, many others, we were glad that such a decision had been arrived at, it being almost a pledge that something would be done to bring about a more satisfactory state of affairs. We noted by the most recently presented reports of the Montreal and Quebec Harbour Commissioners that they have referred to enquiries into the losses caused by collisions and wrecks in what is considered a pilotage ground. Several pilots have been suspended for negligence or incompetence by both Boards, while at Montreal an important discussion took place arising out of the case of the *SS. Earl of Londale*, which came into collision with some small craft, consisting of four small vessels laden with grain and flour in tow of a small steamer. In this case it was found that neither on the tug, steamer, nor on any of the craft was there a branch pilot; and, while occupying the improved channel, the captain of the tug and the man acting as pilot declared that they believed the channel at the place of collision was only about 200 feet wide, while they had a channel exceeding 1,200 feet. It was contended by the members of the Board that the Harbour Commissioners required an increase of their powers in this regard, in the first place to prevent the utilization of the deep channel by that class of vessels which could sail in almost any portion of it. Then the law was shown to be inconsistent with itself, since that, while it compelled owners of vessels to pay pilots, it did not compel them to have them on board. The question of rafts which floundered about almost unmanageably was also brought up, and this was shown to be by no means an unfruitful cause of loss and accident. The frequency of collisions or of cases in which a vessel has run aground are so great that it is by no means to be wondered at that rates of insurance between the two ports have become almost as high as for the entire remainder of the ocean passage. There must be something wrong somewhere, and it is to be hoped that, whatever it is, the commissioners will take vigorous action, their hands being made as free as possible, with a view not to making any undue restrictions, but in order that there shall no longer be any question as to the subject of safety. Immense amounts of money have been expended to remedy existing evils, but accidents are conti-