

Here is \$447,000 annual expenditure, which the present system requires. Now the deficit of operating the Prince Edward Island Railway costs \$101,000; the tunnel itself would probably earn \$100,000; and the Intercolonial Railway itself on the mainland could be made to earn, it is estimated, \$100,000 more than it now does if the Island tunnel were constructed. Here we have \$301,000 to add to the \$447,000, which the present order of things is costing Canada, making the aggregate \$748,500.

Consider now, the probable outgo which the constructed tunnel would entail. Mr. Haney, the contractor, offered in Ottawa the other day to undertake the building of the tunnel for \$10,000,000, and to complete it in six years. This estimate of cost is practically the same as one made fourteen years ago by Douglas Fox, the British engineer. The interest charge on this sum would be \$300,000 yearly; and the up-keep and depreciation are estimated to be say \$50,000 more. Subtract this \$350,000 from the \$748,500, which it has been shown the present inadequate system of communication costs, and there remains \$398,500 per annum, as the saving to the country by the construction of the Prince Edward Island tunnel.

Some of these statements and estimates are hypothetical, others possibly subject to deduction. The assumed earnings, for example, are an uncertain quantity. But even so, the case made out for the tunnel scheme looks much more favorable than any thing we had previously heard or read on the subject, while the construction is made to appear much more feasible than the general public has believed. True, the population of the province by last census is only 103,000—it was 109,000 in 1891, and the loss is in part attributed to the isolation of the Island by the winter conditions—but it is very important that these 103,000 stalwart people should not suffer year after year discomfort and loss when there is a reasonable probability that by tunnelling Northumberland Strait satisfaction could be given them, and even if Father Burke's postulates and estimates are even measurably correct, an economy will be effected by the Dominion of something considerable per year on the present outlay. It is significant that the Maritime Board of Trade, and the boards of Montreal, Halifax, and Toronto have all pronounced in favor of the scheme.

THE WHOLESALE GROCERY TRADE.

The opening of navigation has not brought any great increase in business in general lines. At the same time its present state cannot be complained of, for while it is by no means extraordinarily brisk, it is probably up to the normal.

Distinct easiness has come over the sugar market since the Easter holidays, owing to dullness in the primary markets for raw. The movement in granulated is for the present by no means large, but it is expected by wholesalers to improve before long. Molasses is also somewhat weaker than it was. New Orleans, however, is rather scarce, a feature attributed by American sources to uncertainty of the actings of the Canadian tariff. Maple syrup has been in brisk demand, but the quality of much of it, in spite of all the efforts towards absolute purity, leaves much to be desired.

A feature of the trade still continues to be in the strength of canned vegetables. Indeed it has become, with the growing scarcity, still more marked. Quite large importations have been made in tomatoes from the United States. These are now quoted at \$1.25 to \$1.30. Corn is also scarce and wanted. Practically

all sorts of canned fruits and vegetables are in demand. Sardines also are scarce, and judging from reports to hand concerning the new pack, prices are likely to advance.

In teas the demand is fair, but no great business in the trade is to be remarked. Ceylons are in better request than Japans just now. On the other hand, the movement in coffee is increasingly good. Indeed there seems to be in this country at the present time a growing inclination towards coffee at the expense of tea. Perhaps we are imitating the Americans in this respect. Cocoa, too, is becoming more popular, but to a slower degree. For spices there is the ordinary quiet, but steady enquiry. In rice higher prices are expected to prevail.

For dried fruits, the demand may be said to be rather above the average for this time of year. Prices are moving quite quickly, and large sizes are on the scarce side, owing to the comparative shortness of the crop. Evaporated apricots are very costly, and the demand for them seems to suffer accordingly; evaporated apples are dull. Currants are weak, but prices keep fairly steady. New Brazil nuts are arriving, and meeting with fairly good enquiry. Peanuts are quite firm.

LIFE ASSURANCE IN CANADA.

Following up the brief comment we were able to make last week upon the growth of life assurance in Canada, we proceed to give further particulars of that business. The abstract of life companies' statements gives some interesting tables, one or two of which are reproduced on another page. Taking together life, endowment, term and every other kind of life policies issued, we find that the companies doing business in Canada issued in 1904, calendar year, 183,861 policies, covering \$104,016,862, nearly half of which were life, about one-third endowment or industrial. This report deals with business done in Canada only, for several Canadian companies transact life assurance in other countries.

The aggregate of life policies of all kinds in force at the close of last year was 657,975 in number, and \$593,713,800 in amount, \$35,844,900 of this was industrial business. Much the larger share of these policies had been issued by Canadian companies, thus:—

	No. of Co's.	No. of Policies.	Amount.
Canadian companies....	21	329,710	\$369,875,373
British companies.....	*14	21,722	43,184,512
United States companies	16	306,543	180,653,915
Total	51	657,975	\$593,713,800

It is shown by these figures that the proportion in which this business is shared by the different groups of companies is as under: Canadian companies, 62.30 per cent.; British companies, 7.28 per cent.; United States companies, 30.42 per cent. The Canadian organizations getting not far from two-thirds of the whole.

Thirty years ago, only a fourth of the business was in the hands of Canadian companies, the record of amount at risk of 1875 standing \$21,957,000 for the Canadian, \$19,456,000 for the British, and \$43,596,000

*It should be stated that of these 14 companies only seven take new business.