

production in the industries of the province." This is very gratifying. In 1905 the mineral production of the province was \$21,403,000, which exceeds any on record.

The fruits of British Columbia are a source of considerable profit. No less than 4,237 tons of fruit grown in the province passed over the C.P.R. last year. The Finance Minister looks forward to British Columbia, "becoming the richest and most valuable of all the provinces in the Dominion of Canada."

COLLAPSE OF A ROOF WATER TANK.—An appalling accident occurred on 3rd inst., by the huge water tank on the roof of a warehouse in St. Paul street crashing through the roof then breaking up, and flooding the building. One employe, a young girl, was crushed to death and serious damage done to the contents of the warehouse. It is easy to be wise after an event but it is obvious that, there was not adequate provision made for carrying the weight of this tank, when full of water which is estimated at 50 tons. The exact weight was known when it was erected. There are other tanks of the same class placed on warehouse and factory roofs which ought to be promptly inspected, and measures taken, wherever needful, to make their support so secure as to render an accident almost impossible.

CHICAGO AND MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.—A vote of the citizens of Chicago has been cast in favour of street railway enterprises being owned, but against their being operated by the municipality.

If these votes are acted upon the street railways in Chicago will become the property of the city, but they will be leased to some company. A length of time must elapse before the railways can be purchased from the present owners and arrangements made for leasing the lines, the proceedings in connection with which will be highly interesting.

The citizens of Chicago are evidently of the opinion expressed by Mr. Dalrymple, the Glasgow expert, who after observing the conditions declared that, the operation of trading enterprises by the municipality was not advisable.

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.—The City of Leeds, the great cloth mart, having tried to operate a municipal electric light, heat and power plant for some years has been compelled to admit that the business has been a failure. Year after year the accounts of this enterprise have been so manipulated as to conceal its actual condition and results.

The so-called "surplus earnings" were arrived at by a system of account keeping which would be the road to ruin if adopted by a private company. These quite imaginary profits would have disappeared had due appropriations been made yearly for cost of wear and tear, for such renewals and improvements as plant of that nature call over. So the plant was allowed to depreciate in order to throw dust in the eyes of the ratepayers by the money needed to keep it in good condition being devoted to the reduction of the rates. One can hardly conceive such folly being perpetrated in so intelligent a community as that of Leeds. The Committee in charge of this municipal enterprise has asked that all the money contributed as profits towards the general revenue be returned to the elec-

tric light and power enterprise. This will involve an increase in the rates for the ordinary services of the city and an advance also in the price of electric light and power. The Leeds experience differs from other cities in England only in this respect, the municipal authorities there have frankly confessed their error, while, in other places, it is still persisted in and the accounts cooked to conceal the actual facts.

THE PROCEEDURE OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INSURANCE.—Elsewhere in this issue we have devoted considerable space to this subject. The present method of procedure is bound to create distrust, and be injurious to the public and the companies. The giving forth of *ex-parte* statements is manifestly unfair. The Commission should be reorganized and arrangements made to publish the statements in full containing evidence on both sides, together with such recommendations as may be deemed necessary and advisable for the future conduct of the business. Such, for instance, as alteration in the law regarding the investment powers of the companies; setting forth the manner in which statements of a uniform character are to be published, and defining the duties and responsibilities in connection with the superintendence. It is regrettable that the policy-holders should already begin to become alarmed, and allow their policies to lapse, or otherwise dispose of them, which involves a sacrifice to those who can least afford it. The policy-holders need not be alarmed, for the life offices transacting business in Canada to-day are amply able to meet all their obligations. The only weakness, if it can be called one, is the anxiety of the companies to write a large amount of new business, for which they have to pay liberally in consequence of the keen competition which now exists. This naturally induces the companies to strain every effort to get as high rates of interest as possible.

STREET RAILWAY STRIKES.—Following in the footsteps of Montreal and Toronto, the capital of Manitoba, Winnipeg, is having its turn of a street railway strike. Western strikers were inclined to be too vigorous, but the authorities took the bull by the horns in consequence of which their ardour was cooled. Efforts are being made to settle the dispute by arbitration. These strikes while causing trouble to the proprietors and managers of street railways, create a great deal of distress to the families of strikers and it takes a large increase of wages to make up for the loss sustained while the bread winner.

Workmen do not as a rule consider the effects of a strike, or they would not so readily throw up their employment with the risk of not being reinstated. There are signs of the strike having its backbone already broken.

MONTREAL GAS QUESTION.—Special meeting was held on to consider the gas question. A motion to appoint a special committee comprising the chairmen of the various civic committees to confer with the Gas Company was defeated, and the matter was referred to the Fire and Light Committee.

The gas question alone is only a small part of the problem before the council, the chief being that relating to electric light, an earnest effort should be made to settle both on a satisfactory basis.