

## Prominent Topics.

### Montreal's Water Shortage.

To the lay mind, the astonishing fact about the shortage of water which Montreal will apparently have to endure for a period of three weeks, is that the authorities should have tolerated so long a condition of affairs by which the city was practically dependent upon the continued good behaviour of one piece of machinery. A second pump, as it happens, was delivered last June, and instead of its erection being at once put in hand as a matter of urgency, the thing was dilly-dallied with, and erection has not been completed at the present time, when the pump is wanted, and badly wanted. While it is not necessary to be unduly disturbed by the many alarmist statements, which have been put into circulation, it goes without saying that the fire department would be somewhat handicapped by the existing condition of affairs in the event of a serious outbreak of fire, and it is to be hoped that the comparative immunity from large outbreaks which has been experienced by the city for several months will be continued over the period of repairs. For fire underwriters it is a time of additional anxiety, which they will not be sorry to see at an end.

### Anglo-German Relations.

A special cable to the New York American reports the Kaiser as saying to German delegates to the Anglo-Saxon Conference in London:—"Confidentially speaking my aim is to do away with Anglo-German bitterness. I feel that Germany has nothing to gain from a business standpoint, either from a war or from a continuance of the present unpleasant and nerve-shaking relationship. We have excellent relations with all the powers in the world except England and England is not only our greatest customer but also our nearest relative. This condition must be ended or mended. Let us mend." It is said that what the Kaiser really wants is an alliance but that he realizes that the time is not ripe to broach the subject.

Frankly the words attributed to His Imperial Majesty sound rather more like his real sentiments than any that he would be likely to utter "confidentially", to people who would be likely to give them away to the New York American. Whether his private sentiments or his expressed opinions they do the Emperor infinite credit and the tone might well be imitated by the mischievous newspapers of Germany and England. The most cordial relations between the two countries are not incompatible with England carrying out its avowed naval policy. There has been too much pin-pricking on both sides. The strongest argument for Great Britain maintaining an overwhelming sea-power is that it makes for peace; and pin-pricking certainly does not make for peace. At best war is an evil, it is not worth what it costs. A war between Great Britain and Germany would

be a colossal misfortune for victor and vanquished and nobody but a fool would go into it with a light heart. The Spanish war does not appear to have done Cuba much good and has landed the United States into lots of trouble and expense. The only satisfactory feature is that the war nearly ruined some of the newspapers that were responsible for it.

### The People and the Civil Service.

A remarkable and rather encouraging change in public opinion regarding civil service appointments is reported from France. In that country even more than in England, the United States or Canada, the darling ambition of poverty stricken gentility was always thought to be a civil service appointment.

A letter from Paris now says that in the last twelve-months the number of applicants for civil service posts actually dwindled by 80 per cent. In 1899 applicants at the Ministry of Public Instruction numbered fifty for four posts. This year there were only twelve for ten. At the Colonial Office candidates have fallen off from twenty-three for two vacancies to seventeen for six. At the Public Works Office two years ago there were eleven applicants for six posts, and last November eight vacancies attracted only six candidates. Finally, at the War Office in 1904 some 120 applicants turned up for fourteen vacancies, and this year there were only eighteen for seven. At the Council of State, nine candidates applied for five posts, as against 100 for three ten years ago.

This state of affair speaks well for the French people. We may yet hope to see the time when the Dominion Government will have to advertise for help wanted in the Civil Service.

A bulletin issued on Wednesday by the Census and Statistics Office covers the crop conditions in Canada for the month ended September 30. The estimates of yield published a month ago, it says, could only be regarded as of preliminary value, because, in consequence of the bad weather and late season harvesting operations had made so little progress. The new estimates of yield obtained from correspondents at the end of September confirm generally the previous estimates for most of the crops, but inasmuch as very little threshing had been possible and large areas of grain were still unharvested, it is feared that the final estimates, after completion of the threshing, may turn out lower than the figures now given.

For spring wheat the estimated production is 188,816,600 bushels as compared with 189,904,500 bushels last year. For fall wheat the estimate is 16,868,700 bushels compared with 26,014,000 bushels last year, the total estimated wheat production being therefore 205,685,300 bushels as compared with 215,918,500 bushels in 1911, a decrease of 5 p.c. The yield per acre is 21.08 bushels for all wheat as against 20.77 bushels last year. Oats show a total production of 381,502,000 bushels compared with 348,585,600 bushels last year, the yield per acre being 41.39 bushels compared with 37.75. Barley is estimated to yield a total of 43,895,100 bushels compared with 40,631,000 bushels last year, the yield per acre being 31.00 bushels against 28.94. The total production of rye is 3,086,000 bushels against 2,668,800 bushels in 1911, the yields per acre being respectively 20.75 and 17.41 bushels. Of oats, barley and rye increases in total production as compared with last year represent percentages of 9, 8 and 15. The estimated production of peas is 4,202,400 bushels, of beans 1,106,800 bushels, of buckwheat 10,924,100 bushels, of flaxseed 21,143,400 bushels, of mixed grains 17,940,900 bushels, and of corn for husking 14,218,400 bushels.