

CORPORATION REPORT OF THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN, 1896-97.

We have been favored with a copy of the Corporation Report of the City of Cape Town, South Africa, which is a most elaborate and comprehensive municipal document. Although the Report is for the year ending 23rd September last, it was delivered here through the Post Office on the 25th October. One statement is made up to 31st August, 1897, numerous others to 30th June, all of which are full of details. The Report contains a table of Contents and a list of Appendices, showing careful compilation. Such promptness in getting out a Report crowded with tabular matter, charts, statistics, reports of meetings, official returns, occupying 240 pages, foolscap size, is very remarkable; such promptness is a striking contrast to the time usually occupied in preparing public official documents. The Mayor of Cape Town is Sir John Woodhead, Kt., J. P., who was knighted as a Jubilee honor. He is serving as Mayor now for the fourth time. There are features in the Cape Town Report which show the City to have conditions similar to Montreal. Its Jubilee demonstration was very like the one in this city, though some features of the South African procession were different, and mysterious. One part of the parade is styled: "Ebenhaezer Weldadig Genootschap," a phrase which leaves a large field for the imagination. We feel more at home in reading of Odd Fellows, Foresters, Caledonians, Masons, Templars, with other friendly societies. When we find the ceremonial closed with "God save the Queen," sung by the whole population, we are brought into close touch with our fellow colonials of whose intense loyalty it is inspiring to read. One part of this Report reads also home-like, for it laments the insufficiency of the local dock accommodation, and predicts the abandonment of ship ping in favor of other ports unless the wharves are enlarged. One custom of Cape Town we do not observe, which is "Corporation Sunday." On this day the civic officials go in state to church and hear a special sermon. The text of the last one betrays much local pride: "Is this the City men call the perfection of beauty?" We feel disposed to dispute the point, though, when we consider how strikingly similar are the main topographical features of Cape Town with those of Montreal we are less jealous. That city like ours is built at the foot of a mountain, with a water frontage visited by ocean vessels; it has a Signal Station like our "Look Out," the view from which is there also one of the great local attractions. How wide, however, is the difference between the cities is shown by a passage in the Report calling for the Kaffirs being deprived of walking sticks, as this is said to be a danger to the peace of Cape Town. The population is about 60,000, over one-half of whom are "colored," that is, Kaffirs, who are only semi-civilised. The death rate of whites is 21.5 per 1,000 of colored, 37.0, but the latter gain by a higher birth-rate. The general yearly revenue is \$532,500,

and for water service, \$115,000. The city debt is \$3,259,000. The debentures at 4 per cent. range in price from 115 to 117, so also do those at 5 per cent., which is accounted for by the former running until 1943, while the latter mature in 1922. The city is supplied with a special salt-water service in case of fires, the mains of which extend 15 miles, with 250 hydrants attached. The Corporation Fire Brigade is supplemented by a Volunteer Brigade. In several features Cape Town sets a good example to all cities. Its public gardens are splendidly equipped; it has daily band performances in the open air; it is placing all electric wires underground; like Detroit and other United States cities it will not allow a street to be built upon until it has sewers, etc.; it provides shelter for the horses and cattle of farmers who come to the city markets; and its watchfulness over sanitation appears vigilant and well-devised. The Report is adorned by a portrait of the Mayor, Sir J. Woodhead, Kt., arranged in his official robes and his handsome chain of office. Other illustrations and charts add great interest to this remarkably comprehensive Corporation Report, which, in its completeness of detail, admirable arrangement, and rapidity of publication, reflects the very highest credit upon the officials of Cape Town, by whom it was compiled, and local printers by whom the work was so skilfully and so swiftly executed.

THE FATE OF THE WEST INDIES.

The *English Bankers' Magazine* discusses the question to which we made reference in our last issue, viz.: the danger to the West Indies by the threatened extinction of their sugar interests. The question is asked: "Why should the West Indian Islands rely so much upon sugar?" It appears that the trade in sugar cane products amounts to 75 per cent. of the total trade of the Islands, excluding Jamaica and the gold product of British Guiana. The climatic conditions so favourable to the sugar cane are equally so to all tropical and sub-tropical products. It does not, however follow that growing a leading product like sugar can be abandoned without enormous losses and the ruin of those engaged in the trade as the *Bankers' Magazine* implies. The suggestion to make bananas and other fruits substitutes for the sugar cane in the West Indies is made on the assumption that the growing of those fruits on an enormously increased scale would be equally profitable to the present sugar trade. This could not be, because already the crops of those fruits are not so profitable as to allow of prices being largely reduced, as they would be were the production doubled. The West Indies can grow all the fruits which can be sold at a profit and still have left all the land at present devoted to the sugar industry. Since 1882, the production of beet sugar in Europe has risen from 1,733,000 tons to 3,840,200 tons, which exceeds the production of cane sugar. The fall in prices since 1881, owing to this enlargement of beet sugar production, has