

well as last spring, and now have large stocks on hand, while their harvest has not been so unfavorable as many had predicted. British farmers, on the contrary, have not been fortunate this season. The number of pigs in the United Kingdom has decreased in twelve months 28 per cent. The price of sheep since 1899 has fallen about 18s per head; the hay crop is a complete failure, and "there is hardly any good crop;" even barley, which was the prize crop of the year, has suffered from heavy rains and high winds. Naturally, then, it is to be expected that British farmers will hurry their grain to market, and any considerable recovery, therefore, is not looked for. "In spite of all that," the *Starist* ventures "to think that the price of wheat is now too low, and that there must be a recovery long before the end of the agricultural year."

This opinion it bolstered by the continued crop failure in Russia. That country will not be able to export heavily, having no surplus to draw from. Then, again, it is probable that India, Australia, South America and similar countries drew largely last year on old stocks, because prices were high then, and "they were tempted to hurry to market everything they had ready," in spite, then, of what remains over in the United States from last year's harvest, some people are by no means convinced that there is a large surplus from past years, taking the world all over. The London paper named is rather inclined to think that the surplus is very much smaller than usual.—*Bradstreet's*.

Fire At Virden.

The town of Virden, Manitoba, was visited by a disastrous fire on Wednesday night. The fire broke out about midnight, in the rear of the Central hotel stables, and spread rapidly. Following is the report as wired to the *Free Press*:

A big fire took place at midnight, said to have commenced in rear of the Central hotel stables. A strong wind from the southeast carried the flames to Wilcox & Higginbotham's stores. Koester & Sons' place was next burnt. The Virden house, Wyatt's stables and several other buildings were on fire at the same time, including the C.P.R. railway sheds and dwelling. By the extraordinary work of the fire brigade and people generally the fire was under control about 4 o'clock. The loss as far as known is \$10,000; insurance \$20,000.

The Virden House is a total loss. The value of the building is \$4,000; insured \$2,500. The contents were valued at \$5,000; insurance \$700. The loss was by removal and breakage only. McDonald & Hill's total loss is \$2,000; insurance \$1,500. The Grand Central hotel's total loss is: Buildings \$4,000, insurance \$2,500; contents, total loss, \$5,700; no insurance. The barber shop total loss on building is \$300, insurance \$400; total loss, stock \$200, covered by insurance. Wilcox & Co., total loss of building; value \$1,500, insurance \$1,000; stock mostly removed to their new brick and stone building. Estimate of stock burnt not made out. Jones' butcher shop, badly damaged; insurance \$500. The fire was stopped at Jones' by the efforts of the brigade and assistance from residents.

The fire was carried by strong winds over to the C.P.R. station house and sheds. Hillier's loss of furniture is about \$500, covered by insurance. The C.P.R. loss by removal and damage is \$300. Wyatt's lime house was burned down. Loss on contents and building, \$400. No insurance. J. Higginbotham's drug store and Norseworthy's harness shop are a total loss. The buildings were valued at \$3,000. Insurance \$2,000. Higginbotham's stock is also a total loss. Value about \$5,000, insurance about \$2,500. Norseworthy's stock was partly saved. No insurance. Koester's flour and feed building and contents are a total loss, insurance only \$200; loss about \$600. Mrs. Woolhouses' loss by removal of stock of fancy goods, toys,

stationery, etc., is covered by insurance. Mr. Perry loses by removal; no insurance. Mr. Foster and Mr. Fraser also lose by removal; covered by insurance.

The McBean elevator, grist mill, tank house, C. P. R. freight sheds, office and stationmaster's dwelling and many other buildings quite a distance from the burning buildings caught fire, but were immediately extinguished with little or no damage to the buildings.

This is the second serious fire in Virden within two years. Last year the block just south of the one now in ashes was destroyed. The block burned to-day was bounded by Nelson street, Sixth avenue and Wellington street. The Grand Central hotel, in which the fire is said to have originated, faces Sixth avenue and closely adjoins Wilcox's store, which is on the corner of the avenue and Wellington street. The stores of Higginbotham and Jones faced Nelson street and were so close to the others that it was impossible to save them. Between the Grand Central hotel and the other hotel of the town, the Virden House, there stood a frame implement warehouse, and this catching at an early stage set fire to the Virden house and stables, on the corner of 6th avenue and Wellington streets, and being dry frame structures, they fell an easy victim with nearly all their contents. The C.P.R. railway sheds were across Sixth avenue and some distance from the burned block, but not sufficient distance away to escape the hot blaze and were damaged with several other buildings in their locality.

As far as can be ascertained the insurance is light and will cover only a very small portion of the losses. On Wilcox's general store there was \$1,000 in the Manchester company and the contents were insured for three thousand dollars divided between the Commercial Union represented here by J. Patterson and one of the companies represented by A. Holloway. Higginbotham's general store was insured for \$400 in the Royal Canadian. On the Virden hotel buildings and stables there was \$2,000, half in the North British and Mercantile and half in the Caledonian. The contents of the hotel were covered with \$300 in the Lancashire and \$300 in the citizens companies.

Farm Values and Mortgages in Minnesota.

Much interesting light upon the condition of the farmer to-day as compared with a decade ago will be furnished by the report of the Minnesota Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bureau has been engaged for some time preparing a statement of the relative number of mortgage foreclosures for the years 1891 and 1891, together with a comparative statement of farm values and mortgage redemptions for the two years. This work has already occupied two years of the time of the Bureau. We have not yet received a copy of the report itself, but have gathered the information which follows from extracts and abstracts appearing in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. It appears that the statistics of land values presented in the report, together with all the allied statistics, have been compiled from the records of the register of deeds' offices in the several counties of the state. In the tables of land values are included the sales of land by the acre. It takes no account of land sold by the lot or block as in the towns and cities. In each county in the state there is first taken an abstract of all transfers of land for the given years, where those transfers appear on record. From this list is then eliminated all deeds given where no complete consideration or value of the land is given in the deeds. Thus all deeds for a dollar and all deeds given to clear up title are stricken out. The list that remains includes all lands sold where the value of the land is expressed in the instrument of sale.

The data thus gathered are being arranged

in a number of tables, some fifteen in all. The work on these tables will not be completed before the middle of next month, but it has progressed far enough to bring out the fact that the average value of farm lands in Minnesota, as a whole, has advanced materially in ten years. The general advance of values, it is said, has brought into the market many acres of railroad land that is of so poor a quality that it was unsalable ten years ago. This land is sold at a low price per acre, and in a few counties so much of this land was sold in the year 1891 as to bring down the average value of all lands sold in these counties to a lower level than that reached in 1891. It is pointed out, however, that the fact that the land has advanced in these counties is shown, among other things, by the increase in the average value of lands other than railroad lands, and by the average price at which land has been sold on foreclosure.

With a view to bringing out the real causes of the mortgage foreclosures of to-day in Minnesota the counties of the state are grouped in four divisions. In the first division are placed the mortgage records of the older settled agricultural counties of the state, the counties having quite generally adopted a diversified system of crops. The second division comprises the remainder of the counties mainly devoted to agriculture, including those counties which mainly rely for their income upon one or a very few crops, and embracing the great wheat-producing section of the state. In the third group will be arranged the mortgage statistics for the counties mainly covered by timber and the ones in whose territory are being developed mines of various kinds, while the fourth divisions will contain the record of forced sales of land in the three cities of Duluth, Minneapolis and St. Paul. None of the statistical collections have been completed as yet, but the figures relating to the first division have been tabulated so far as to render some comparison based on them possible. According to the journal quoted, the number of foreclosures of farm mortgages in twenty-two counties in the three southern tiers was in 1891 less than a fourth of what it was ten years before. One influence making for improvement in the interval was the extension of a system of diversified farming.

The journal quoted says that the other groups in which the mortgage foreclosures of the state are arranged show a marked contrast with the counties just referred to, and adds: "The greatest contrast is presented by placing the record of the cities by the side of the farming counties grouped as above. One of the larger cities of the state shows more foreclosures than all the counties in group one. The era of speculation led many people of small means to buy land in or near cities on credit. They did not have capital on which to base a successful speculation, and hence the bad result shown by the long list of foreclosures of acres, lots and blocks in the three cities of Duluth, Minneapolis and St. Paul, particularly the latter two. This same act is the explanation of the large number of mortgage foreclosures in counties containing timber and mining lands and not largely agricultural." This preliminary account of the work of the Minnesota bureau will cause the completed report to be looked for with interest.—*Bradstreet's*.

The Canadian paper makers, says a Montreal telegram, have decided to advance the price of paper owing to the prohibition of the importation of foreign rags.

The Ottawa board of trade has received communications from several influential lumber firms asking the board to request the Government to postpone the sale of timber limits announced to take place in October, and to take into consideration the advisability of reimposing the export duty on logs. It is pointed out that there is a duty of \$1 per 1,000 on sawn lumber going to the States, while logs are admitted free for manufacture in the States, therefore American lumbermen were able to outbid Canadians at these sales of timber limits.