

bar silver having been favorable to the China trade, and to the great increase of our cotton goods exported to China, caused by the high prices ruling with the American productions on the similar goods, while increase in the import appears principally to be due to a large increase in the import of cotton from India.

CANADA'S FIRE WASTE.

There is little diminution in Canada's fire losses. The Monetary Times' record for November, printed elsewhere in this issue, brings the total direct monetary losses to \$22,148,455 for the eleven months of the current year. This compares with \$17,471,725 for the corresponding period of last year. The total losses for the two years, 1909 and 1910, to date amount to \$41,053,993. The current December record has yet to be compiled. Fire insurance men will never comment upon the year's business until December 31st has come and gone. The fire hazard is always in evidence, and the present month may easily increase materially the total losses of the year.

A glance at the list of property damaged and destroyed by fire last month impresses one with the fact that few things are proof against fire. During November were destroyed 47 dwellings, 27 barns, 26 factories, 18 stores, 9 stables, 7 automobiles, 3 warehouses, 3 restaurants, 4 steamboats, 2 roller rinks, 2 blacksmith shops, 3 stations, and a laundry, hall, clubhouse, institute, asylum, oil house, business section, garage, farm buildings, ice house, newspaper plant, pool room, school, hotel, church, engine house, railway cars.

Among the causes of fires during November were overheated furnaces, defective chimneys, overheated stovepipes, gasoline, overturned lamps, an overturned heater, an overheated kiln, lighting a match near a barrel, carelessness with a torch, hot coal from an engine, gas leak, live ashes, defective grate, mice gnawing at matches.

The fire record is made more serious on account of the heavy loss of life sustained in conflagrations. During 1909, 219 persons lost their lives in this manner. For the past eleven months 237 fatalities occurred, a total for the twenty-three months of 456. The record for November shows that playing with matches, an overturned lamp, and clothes catching fire account for several fatalities, the latter being responsible for no less than six.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

The investigation of the sugar trust is not as sweet as it sounds.

An engineering contemporary states that the first gas-blowing engines in Canada started recently. Cobalt, oil and other promoters apparently were overlooked.

The following outburst is ascribed to Mr. L. H. Timmins, who is much interested in the Porcupine mining district. An English weekly journal reproduces the gem, which undoubtedly will hurt the prospects of a promising gold mining camp: "Porcupine will be the richest and biggest gold camp in the world. Yes, without making any exception. Porcupine will surpass the Rand and all the gold fields of South Africa. This is not only my opinion, but it is the epitome of the statements of the engineers at Porcupine, who are thoroughly familiar with the mines of the Transvaal, Australia, and other great gold fields." We do not think that Mr. Timmins uttered these irresponsible words. They look more like the imaginative and perhaps interested pen of a writer in the English journal. Porcupine is a good prospect. Only harm can be done by comparing that prospect with Witwatersrand, the annual gold production of which averages approximately \$150,000,000. It is probably too much to expect an Ontario mining camp to be developed without the froth of stock pedlars and promoters.

PARLIAMENT AND THE BANK ACT

IV.

POWERS OF SALE—NEW YORK CALL LOANS.

Dr. Johnson refers pointedly, in his work on our banking system, to the large powers which the Canadian law gives the banks over the assets and businesses of their debtors. He explains that banks in the United States have not so favorable a position for enforcing collection of debts due to them. It is scarcely to be expected that the Canadian Parliament will change its policy in this regard. It may be true that when a Canadian business firm or concern goes into insolvency the mercantile and other creditors of the insolvent look with irritation upon the position of the bank or banks that are involved.

Often it happens that the banks have all or most of the good security, and until their claims are settled the other creditors cannot participate in the realization therefrom. Our legislators understand better than do the legislators in the neighboring country that laws of this nature have a most beneficent effect in loosening the purse-strings of the banks. Because they are given large powers of enforcing collection of debts, and because they are allowed to take security of various kinds and enjoy an indisputable title thereto, the banks are induced to go readily and cheerfully to the assistance of practically every Canadian industry.

That Money is Safe.

All they want to know is that their money is safe when applied to the various industries and trades, and they will advance funds liberally at low rates. Suppose we had followed the policy in vogue in the United States, and our laws had been framed solely with the view of allowing no advantages or privileges to the banks when their debtors became insolvent; and with the view of forbidding them to take special security, and forcing them to take their places alongside all other creditors, what would have been the results? They would have been most disagreeable for the mercantile and industrial classes. Under laws of that nature the banks would have refused to lend an efficient or satisfactory support to many of our most active trades and industries; and, as the risk of lending to commercial interests would have been greater, the rates of discount charged would necessarily have been higher than those which were actually in force.

So, when a Canadian merchant feels annoyed because the bank has the bulk of the realizable assets of an insolvent, who owes him money, the merchant should bear in mind the fact that were it not for the conditions and laws permitting the bank to assume that position, his credit from his own bank would not be obtained so easily, and his rate of discount would be, perhaps, a full one per cent. higher than that actually in force.

Permit More Efficient Aid.

While it is not at all likely that there will be pressure upon Parliament to alter this particular feature of the banking law, it is worth while mentioning these considerations in order to illustrate the situation for the benefit of parties who believe that the powers of sale and of taking security enjoyed by the banks constitute something for which they owe the country or the Government a return in taxation or in some other way. The fact is that those powers permit the banks to aid more efficiently in developing the country, and in giving them to the banks the Government has materially increased the usefulness of the banking machine, and has benefited every man who has occasion to borrow banking funds.

It will be just as well at this point to take note of the banking policy of lending at call in Wall Street a large part of the reserve against deposits. Time and again it