As an exhibit of "hustling," of "getting there," nothing in the world can compare to Canada's grand annual transformation scene when the change is made from Winter to Summer with almost the rapidity shown on the stage. Ten days ago the trees on the sides of Mount Royal wore the sombre, stern hue of winter. A few, bolder than the rest, were timidly putting out a faint sign of life. To day, Victoria Day, the mountain is arrayed in the full glory of its summer robes ; the anemones are as a carpet of white and emerald; the lilac and chestnut have their pendent or plume like flowers, and our orchards are brilliant with apple blossoms. The development which in slower lands requires many weeks, even months, is consummated in Canada in less than a fortnight. Winter is not amiable to Canada. He is often sulky, at times cruel. But when the all-bounteous Creator bids His handmaid, Nature, to resume her beneficient activities, Winter goes off at one bound, and our land becomes suddenly glorious with foliage, with flowers, with blossoms, and the tender blades which have in them the promise of bountiful harvests that "will fill all things living with plenteousness."

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The reports of the City Treasurer and Controller for last year in one volume were issued too late for an extended notice in this issue. The revenue of the city last year was $3,157,614, next year is expected to be $3,332,286. The Controller reports a steady increase of revenue and that all expenditures have been kept within the limits of the appropriations.

## Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents

### TORONTO LETTER.

The Burning of the Sprinklers—A New Insurance Firm—Ample Insurance Accommodation—Reinsurances Fewer—A Sort of Non-Tariff Association—"Rank is but the Guinea Stamp."

Dear Editor,—Curiously, just after my letter appeared in THE CHRONICLE of 10th inst., wherein I questioned the wisdom of the large allowance usually made for sprinklers comes news of the total destruction of the Walkerville Match Factory, a well equipped sprinkled risk. In this case the sprinklers did not get in their work early enough or with sufficient force and effect as to save the valuable properties under their protection I have not at the instant sufficient details of the circumstances, but know the sprinklers were there and that the factory ruins include their remains. I suppose two or three instances of this kind will set the C.F.U.A. reconsidering values pro and con with regard to sprinklered rates. I know of at least one large company, and there are likely others, declining sprinklered risks at present rates, seeing, I suppose, but little money in it.

The Ottawa Fire Insurance Company has opened a second agency in Toronto, Messrs. Stinson and Connon being appointed resident agents, with offices at 18 Leader lane. These young gentlemen come from the head office staff of the Lancashire Fire, with a good standing record from that company. Besides the Ottawa agency they purpose transacting a general insurance business. Having enterprise and push they may be expected to make a place for themselves amongst our insurance workers.

We have now represented in our midst 31 Board Companies and 12 non-Board, all competing for fire insurance business with more or less vigor and more or less success. The facilities for transacting this work are therefore unrivalled. No one needs to go outdoors to get fire insurance effected, and, for the most part, there is but little trouble about rates, all which makes it more pleasant and convenient for the public than it used to be. I refer, of course, to select or choice business. Difficulties often arise in the way of getting satisfactory rates in placing some special hazards, requiring in consequence some delicate manipulation and perhaps a little wire pulling, but no honest applicant need go without insurance these days. There have been instances of risks refused over the counter gaining acceptance later through the good offices of a different broker or agent who was in favor with the chief.

A marked change seems to have come in as regards the writing of large lines of insurance upon one subject, also a shutting down in many quarters upon effecting too frequent and plentiful reinsurance, which habit has been of late years carried on to excess. I suppose one reason for this is the withdrawal of the facilities hitherto enjoyed through what are known as "treaty companies" in the United States and in Britain. The result of companies, in this way coming to be content to carry only net lines, will be a more general distribution of the insurance upon large properties, and this ought to benefit agents generally.

The Keystone Fire having ceased to do business in Ontario has withdrawn its name from the membership of the Toronto Board and goes back to its native province. Mr. Malcolm Gibbs, under whose auspices the Toronto agency was opened and conducted until now, has given his allegiance and influence to the Western Fire as a special agent.

There is a disposition shown by the non-tariff offices to make such arrangements in places of sufficient size and importance whereby they will select one agent to represent them all in his district. In this way they hope to avoid competition with each other, which, of course, would be a horrible thing to have occur: "dog," says the proverb, "will not eat dog." It is not a bad idea on the face of it, because I presume, the agent select would be paid by salary and a small commission, and in this way expenses could be kept down and rates maintained ; this, of course, sounds funny, but pass it by. It is a workable plan, I think, if only they all agree to it. I have, however, noted in my little sphere of observation that there is a high and a low even in the ranks of the non-tariffs. There are grades, but I do not know upon what basis formed, whether of age, of size or of a certain natural or acquired precedence. It may be amusing to have such features appear, but they do appear in a mild way, and, as time goes on, may further develop.

The managers of the insurance institutes might call upon some member to prepare a paper upon the question: Does union with a tariff board or association confer any additional rank or standing in the community upon a fire insurance company? If, yes, state your reasons for your belief.

Yours,

ARIEL.

Toronto, May 21, 1901.

THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS BANK, under management of Mr. Austin, opens its branch in this city on Monday next. The office is in the Temple building.

THE FOLLOWING PLACES are arranging for an electric light or railway system or both, according to the Canadian Electrical News: Strathcona, N. W. T., Thessalon ; Blenheim ; Parry Sound ; Stayner ; Brockville ; Orillia ; St. Mary's; Belleville ; Bridetown; Thorold and a number of towns in Nova Scotia.