

There will be a dearth of home-grown potatoes in British Columbia this winter. The new mine camps have drawn heavily on local supplies, and the latest wholesale price of home-grown tubers in Vancouver and New Westminster has risen to between \$12 and \$13 a ton. Eighteen dollars a ton, wholesale, will likely be reached ere midwinter. Yet at first a glut of home supply was expected and many farmers sold very cheaply. Large quantities of potatoes will doubtless now be imported from Washington State. Next year will, however, see a large increase in the British Columbia acreage under potatoes.

INDIAN TEA CROP, 1896.

The steady development of British colonial tea interests continues. Last year the Indian tea crop of British India amounted to 135,479,062 lbs., while this year the crop is estimated at 141,784,668 lbs. Early in the year it was thought that the crop would be fully 144,000,000 lbs., but recent reports have not been favorable to so large a yield. The Indian Tea Association makes the following estimates:

	Yield, 1896. lbs.	Estimated Yield, 1896. lbs.
Assam	55,604,187	56,645,973
Cachar	17,543,622	19,632,777
Sylhet	22,223,798	24,237,275
Darjeeling	8,257,179	8,164,181
Teral	2,513,938	2,526,540
Dooars	20,090,427	21,204,956
Chittagong	798,768	1,008,494
Chota-Nagpore	261,148	178,472
Kangra	2,186,000	2,186,000
Dehra Dun & Kumaon (Estimate)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Private and Native Gardens do	4,000,000	4,000,000
	135,479,062	141,784,668

INSURANCE ITEMS.

The Detroit fire department has a driver, John Scott by name, who has filled that position for 36 years.

Steps are now being taken to authorize the expenditure by the city of Vancouver of \$60,000 on waterworks extension.

Strafrod has a new fire-alarm system, which is highly spoken of. It does not require that a person wanting to send in an alarm must go to some dwelling-house for a key. There are 14 alarm boxes and the system cost \$2,000.

The most dangerous hours for fires are stated by the chief of the London Salvage Corps to be, first, early morning, when house and office fires are being lighted; next, dinner hour, when factories are vacated; the third and worst time is from 6 to 8 at night after warehouses are closed.

The recently incorporated city of Wellington, in the colliery district of Vancouver Island, is about to undertake the provision of waterworks on a modest scale for its 2,000 inhabitants. It is a town of very modest area, but the population is likely to grow to about 5,000. The waterworks undertaking will not entail any very large expenditure and should be well within the city's resources.

The first nine months of this year show better for Chicago in the matter of fire loss than the same time in 1895. The chief of the fire department reports as follows, according to the *Review*:

	1896.	1895.
Number of fires.....	3,355	3,996
Total losses	\$ 1,108,735	\$ 1,754,000
Total insurance.....	42,016,160	53,308,505

An interesting article on "Policy Forms in Liability Insurance," by A. W. Masters, general manager of the London Guarantee and Accident Company, exhibits the development of casualty insurance during the past quarter century. The figures are as under:

	Jan. 1st, 1871. Two companies.	Jan. 1st, 1896. Twenty-four companies.
Cash capital	\$ 798,000	\$ 9,700,000
Gross assets	1,989,181	66,498,835
Surplus to policy-holders.....	1,707,834	19,970,881
Premiums received.....	679,600	13,706,411
Losses paid	205,737	5,205,220

Election underwriting might be expected in the States, but hardly in England. Yet the underwriters at Lloyd's have issued policies, says the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, to a considerable extent against the risk of Mr. Bryan being elected President of the United States. The premium paid was fifteen guineas per cent., and the underwriter has to pay a total loss in the event of Mr. Bryan being elected President. "His election would cause a very smart fall in all American securities and railway shares, and the insurance is doubtless a 'hedge' against such risk, while the rate is fairly indicative of the view taken of his chances of success."

The writer of a little folder, published by an agent of the United States Life, crosses swords with the author of a pamphlet entitled "Our Lost Millions." The latter publication had no good word to say for American life assurance companies, but accuses them of taking \$40,000,000 out of Canada in twenty-five years and giving none of it back. This was an absurd statement to make, for they are paying death claims and endowments all the time. Mr. Holmes in his folder shows, in answer to another sweeping statement of the pamphleteer about the Government deposits of American companies with the Government, that in 1895 United States companies had \$10,308,000 on deposit in Canada.

CLEARING-HOUSE FIGURES.

The following are the figures of the Canadian clearing-houses for the week ended with Thursday, November 5th, 1896, compared with those of the previous week:

CLEARINGS.	Nov 5th.	Oct. 29th.
Montreal	\$13,242,917	\$10,593,844
Toronto	7,252,715	6,196,270
Halifax	1,141,790	1,205,730
Winnipeg	2,408,968	1,886,323
Hamilton	754,868	681,721
St. John	621,568	455,240
	\$25,422,826	\$21,019,128

Aggregate balances this week, \$3,466,234; last week, \$3,012,904

—Most injudicious real property investments in New Westminster have reduced a capital endowment of \$46,000, there placed on behalf of the local Anglican bishopric, to a present worth of less than \$20,000, and the Bishop would, but for the grant from the great English Church Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, be receiving for stipend and heavy traveling and correspondence expenses, a less sum than \$1,400 a year. Some of the trust funds of the bishopric were actually invested in unimproved town lots, others on wild land in a waterlogged district of the Fraser Valley. Yet these investments were actually made on the advice of business men, at the time supposed to be competent estimators of real property's worth. So difficult is it, apparently, at times to induce trustees to keep within the well-appointed limits of investment of trust funds.

—After all the efforts of the people of Newfoundland to overcome the disastrous effect of the recent bank troubles there, the industrial affairs of that island are confronted with a further unfortunate obstacle in the shape of a serious decline in the price of codfish, which is one of the great staple products. According to a despatch on Friday last to the *Halifax Chronicle*, the price of Newfoundland fish dropped 70 cents per quintal in Portuguese markets on the previous day, owing largely to French and Norwegian competition. This it was thought must further accentuate the prevailing depression and widen the area of probable distress during the coming winter.

—It was thought a great thing to raise in one week, as was done in 1876 in Montreal, the sum of \$4,400 for a charitable purpose. This was accomplished by means of a fancy fair in the old Mechanics' Hall. But the Montreal of 1896 is even richer and more generous, for we learn from a recent letter that the bazaar held last month in that city in aid of the General Hospital will net more than \$11,000. This large sum is to be mainly devoted to providing and maintaining modern and complete surgical instruments and appliances in that deserving institution.

—In a paragraph headed "Reserve Fund to be Divided among Members," published in *THE MONETARY TIMES* and credited to the *New York Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin*, an error was made which we regret. The name of the company whose reserve fund of \$120,000 was ordered by Justice Smyth to be divided, was the Mutual Benefit Life Association, a small New York concern, and not the Mutual Reserve Fund Life.

Since 1894 Canadian imports of British grown tea have shown considerable increase. From January 1st to September 30th the import statistics for the three past years are as follows: Indian—1894, 74,321 lbs.; 1895, 540,809 lbs.; 1896, 211,160 lbs. Ceylon—1894, 91,557 lbs.; 1895, 212,788 lbs.; 1896 197,005 lbs. These figures do not accurately represent the trade, as the import statistics are incomplete.

—Mr. R. Richardson retired from the Bank of Montreal on 1st November, after many years' service as manager of the Belleville branch. He is to be succeeded by Mr. R. J. B. Crombie, at present manager of the Kingston branch of the same bank. The staff of the bank presented Mr. Richardson with a testimonial on the occasion of his leaving the bank's service.