

At the time of going to press last week we were unable to record the result of the election of officers for the Western Union of Fire Underwriters, who held their convention last week in Toronto. We are informed they are as follows: Mr. J. S. Blackvelder, Chicago, president; Mr. C. L. Andrews, Detroit, vice-president, and Mr. John Marshall, Chicago, secretary-treasurer. The next meeting of the union will be held the second Wednesday of April next in Atlantic City, N.J.

GROCERIES and PROVISIONS

The market for coffee, so far as futures are concerned, seems to be improving somewhat in spite of bearish cables to hand in New York from Brazil.

We hear that the steamship "Escalona" is on her way to Montreal from Denia with 1,030 tons of currants, 71,000 boxes of Valencia raisins, and 5,532 cases of Spanish onions. Another fruit boat, the "Bellona," is expected to leave Patras early in October.

The Denia market for new crop Valencia raisins has opened with prices quoted for shipment by the first direct vessel to Montreal, as follows: Layers, 25s. 6d.; selected, 23s. 6d.; fine off-stalk, 20s. 6d., and off-stalk, 19s. 6d. These figures, as compared with the opening ones of the season 1902, show a decline of 4s. per cwt., which was expected, the prospect this year being for an average yield of good quality, while last year the crop was a very small one. There has been no important change in currants. The market locally is quiet, the demand for new crop fruit being somewhat limited, with fine Filiatras offering at 14s. 6d.; Patras at 17s. 3d., and Vostizza at 21s. for shipment by first direct vessel. The Greek market at late reports was active with a firmer tone and an advancing tendency. Early cuttings of the new fruit show up very fine as to color, though somewhat disappointing in size.

DRY GOODS NOTES.

Messrs. M. Fisher & Co., of Montreal and Toronto, importers of worsteds and tweeds, are establishing commodious warehouses in Winnipeg, which will be under the charge of W. D. LeBoutillier.

A large majority of the ratepayers of Orillia, Ont., voted in favor of granting a \$5,000 bonus and free site to the Dominion Linen Milling Co., Limited. The company, which has a capital of \$50,000, will at once build a factory to employ 100 hands.

Millions of dollars are going into the cotton manufacturing business in the South, and New Englanders seem to be those who are chiefly supplying the capital, as they were years ago in the case of the West. High-grade investments in the South, not only in mills, but in transportation and banking enterprises, are reported to be netting 7 to 8 per cent. quite commonly.

The correspondent of the Drapers' Record, stationed in Belfast, Ireland, says that the tone of the linen market in that centre continues good, and the volume of business shows a quick, steady improvement. The reports from the different flax centres are not particularly encouraging. Prices of yarns have become more firm, and orders received are well in excess of production. Linen yarns are in greatly increased demand in nearly all numbers. Continental spinings are also quoted at higher rates. The position of spinners may be considered as unusually strong, and any changes in rates are expected to be still further upward. Brown cloth is in growing request. Powerloom linens for bleaching have sold somewhat more freely. There is a quiet sale for cloth for dyeing and Hollands. Unions are beginning to move freely once more, the reports from the cotton market indicating lower prices. Orders for dress goods for next season are coming to hand to a satisfactory amount. Household linens are still in rather quiet demand, but damasks continue to sell steadily. Handkerchiefs are in moderate request. Export business is quietly expanding.

The Hamilton Cotton Company has sent out a circular stating advances in chenille curtains, table covers, etc., and the Penman Company has advanced some lines of half-hose.

The raw cotton market the last few days has been almost purely that of the professional speculator. Varying weather reports have conduced to this end. The highest points on September and December reached latterly were 11.48 and 10.00c., respectively; on October, November, and January, they were 10.10, 9.99, and 9.97c., respectively.

A report from Nottingham, Eng., says that September has not brought any change for the better in the prospects of the lace trade. The outlook in many branches is gloomy, and however much people try to account for it by blaming the unsettled weather, foreign competition, and the high price of cotton, they do not get any nearer to a solution of the problem—how to improve trade. The present appears to be one of the periodic fits of depression that overtake the lace trade, and doubtless it will pass away, as others have done before it.

—A permanent commercial exhibition of Canadian foods and other products is to be opened at Crystal Palace, London, next month. It is intended to provide the public of Great Britain with a much-needed opportunity for inspecting and handling Canadian goods. Arrangements will be made for the sale of samples of food products, the booking of orders for any article shown, and the free distribution of price lists and literature. The exhibit is conducted by the Permanent Colonial Exhibits Co., 15 Coleman Street, London, E.C.

—Our attention is called by "Estates Limited," Toronto, to the fact that our article of last week on various home-building concerns manifested some misapprehension as to the former's object. In the first place, they point out that the names of the officers of that concern appear on all their prospectuses. As to their plan of procedure, they inform us that their old form of contract has been withdrawn, and that now they are simply carrying on a regular real estate business, agreeing for a certain sum, payable in instalments, to build a specified house.

—Vancouver, B.C., employers are up with the spirit of the times, a spirit which has been forced on them! The employers of five hands and over have been combined into a very strong association, with J. G. Woods, president, and A. E. Goodman, secretary. The retail merchants have also combined, with A. E. Lees, president, and A. E. Goodman, secretary. The ship-owners of Vancouver also combined, with E. H. Heaps, president, and A. E. Goodman, secretary. Four newspaper publishers in the city also joined forces this week, for protection. There were previously combined the shingle manufacturers, the lumber manufacturers, the building contractors, box factories, the master plasterers and the master painters. All these different bodies are to affiliate with the employers' association, so that all employers in the city of Vancouver will be able to meet at the call of one chairman if an emergency should demand it. It is a case of more than two playing at the same game.

CLEARING HOUSE FIGURES.

The following are the figures for Canadian clearing houses for the week ended with Thursday, Sept. 24, 1903, compared with those of the previous week.

CITIES	Sept. 24, 1903	Sept. 17, 1903
Montreal.....	\$19,064,960	\$20,734,036
Toronto	13,569,521	5,737,228
Winnipeg.....	4,450,316	4,576,660
Halifax.....	1,648,078	1,771,265
Hamilton.....	1,008,433	1,191,136
St. John, N.B.....	1,140,857	995,720
Vancouver	1,525,378	1,462,503
Victoria	601,417	809,542
Quebec	1,532,577	1,689,365
Ottawa.....	1,841,284	1,979,427
London	756,347	806,449
	\$47,139,268	\$51,753,381