

FALL EXHIBITIONS.

In spite of rather unsatisfactory weather, the Westminster show and one or more smaller exhibitions on the Mainland seem to have been successful, and the next thing in order is the one which will have been opened here by the time the *BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL* goes to press. We are hearty believers in exhibitions, their tendency being, when anything like liberality is displayed in the offer of prizes, to bring out the best the people can produce, its display having a tendency to stimulate a healthy rivalry which not only is felt in the particular lines for which prizes are offered, but in others where it is expected that special excellence may merit special consideration. Besides, there are not a few people who send in their contributions not because of the rewards that are offered, but because they very properly deem it an honor to have the excellence of their specimens well spoken of. Such people, were there no more than this, would deem themselves to be sufficiently recompensed.

When we consider the influence—the effect—which the display of articles of the highest excellence has upon people who are not so fortunate as to gain first, second, or even third honors—many of them are animated by the success of their rivals to endeavor to do better, and the additional care they give to what it is possible for them to produce in order to get ahead of their neighbors, we find it works up a generous emulation by which every one is advantaged. We are pleased to be able to believe that the Provincial Exhibition is not likely to be inferior to any of its predecessors, as well in quality as in the number of the entries. Moreover, the facilities offered for the transportation of exhibits and exhibitors are reported to be all that could be desired.

RISKS OF ELECTRICITY.

It is admitted by Fire Underwriters in England that the use of electricity has not increased the fire risk in that country. The contrary is, however, held to be true on this side of the Atlantic, much of the increase of the fire rates in the United States in 1891 being, many underwriters think, directly chargeable to the manner of putting electric wires in buildings. Electricity is destined to be not only the great illuminator, but one of the great motive powers of the future. The subject of electric regulation is one of the practical matters that has been upon more than one occasion brought to the special attention of the Victoria Board of Aldermen, but with which they have in a masterly manner failed to deal. On the subject of the difference between Great Britain and the United States with respect to electricity, Mr. G. Binswanger, managing director of the General Electric Company of England, says that in that country there is a decided tendency to reduce premiums on buildings where electrical plants or apparatus are installed. The Phoenix Fire Insurance office, which covers the greater part of the electrical risks in Engl. 3, has not paid a cent for any loss which could be traced to electricity, and no such fire has as yet

occurred in England. Mr. Binswanger thinks this state of affairs is due to two things: First a set of simple and practical fire rules, which are accepted as standards; second, the rigid enforcement of these rules under the supervision of one inspector, whose authority is recognized by manufacturers and insurance companies alike.

LOBSTER AND OYSTER CULTIVATION.

We gather from the eastern papers that the first year's experiment with the newly established lobster hatchery at Pictou N. S., has proved highly successful, about sixty-five millions of young lobsters having been hatched out and placed in the sea, after they had attained a few weeks growth. This is the result of securing the eggs from the female lobsters brought only to one cannery. This hatching business is a comparatively simple and inexpensive business, and it might be that, were a proper study made of the waters and the conditions under which the lobster thrives, British Columbia might in process of time be an extensive producer of this delectable crustacean. The crab, which is almost the twin brother of the lobster, is plentiful, and if he can get along here, surely his relative ought to be able to do the same. The statement above given demonstrates that both spawn and fry might be readily procured, and there ought to be no reason why there should not be experiments made.

While referring to this matter, it might not be out of the way to ask if we are treating the little Olympian oyster as we ought to do? Is it not susceptible of cultivation and development, and since he is indigenous here, why could there not be something done with his Eastern relative? It may be said by some that he would be out of his latitude or longitude here, and that we have not the Gulf stream to freshen him up. But is it not possible that too much has been taken for granted and that the same energy and enterprise in this direction that has been displayed elsewhere might prove remunerative in his case?

THE LAND QUESTION.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company sold 25,000 acres of land last month. The sales for the year so far amount in value to \$1,683,000. This company which as a rule, when it sees that there is any money to be made is run on the broad gauge, fully realizes the advantage of disposing of its landed properties, both from the point of view of the cash immediately derivable and the business that is sure to be derived from lands opened up and developed, and teaches a lesson to many who officially and individually hoard up territory in the most miserly manner, in that way placing an effective barrier in the way of substantial advancement.

The trite business motto of "small profits and quick returns" applies as much to property transactions as it does to other lines of business, and is indeed more cogent with respect to them, for all the improvements that are made indirectly, if not directly, benefit the holdings adjoining

and surrounding, as many have proved in the realization of the fact that the moment they have made sales of eligible lands they have created a market for the remainder of their properties. In this province, the mistake has been made by the different governments in alienating so much of the public domain in such large blocks, thereby creating extensive, useless and mischievous chief-working landed monopolies while indisposed to do any development work have stood in the way of those who would do something.

CAPITAL AND LABOR.

We notice that the British Labor Commission, which has been a considerable length of time in operation, has almost completed its labors. It has taken the testimony of between 400 and 500 witnesses, from whom and the documents which it has collected it has secured some very satisfactory and encouraging information. It has learned that much progress has been made in the United Kingdom in the direction of promoting a proper understanding between capital and labor, and that the efforts of those representing both elements who have tried to make their mutual relationship more friendly and profitable have been fairly successful. Boards of conciliation have for years been in more or less successful operation, and by their assistance both classes have got to understand and respect each other better. As one of the witnesses put it: "The relations of workmen and their employers seem to be entirely changed. There is much more feeling of sympathy and respect than ever existed before."

CANADIAN COMMERCIAL AGENTS.

Last session, the Dominion Parliament passed a resolution authorizing negotiations with the Imperial Government with a view to establishing agents to represent Canadian interests at foreign capitals, Washington being specially mentioned in this connection. The Minister of Finance, has, it is understood, gone to England on this business. The United States has unquestionably largely increased its immigration and extended its commercial relations with other countries through its consular agents, and Canada ought to be in a position to do something in this line. In connection with our present representation in Great Britain, there are many who hold that it partakes too much of the political in its personnel and administration, otherwise there would be no necessity for sending over, as in this instance, the Minister of Finance on what, with a representative in London, ought to be little more than a matter of departmental correspondence.

Information has been received from Ottawa that the British Government had decided, in order to ascertain the complete facts of the seizure of the British Columbia sealing schooners by the Russians, to send a warship to the Copper Island and Siberian coast to make a full and complete investigation. This will be satisfactory to the local interests affected. It is believed that the vessel to be charged with this mission will be taken not from the Pacific but from the China station.