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THE MORNING GUARDIAN.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1898.

STATE INSURANCE.

State socialism has so far advanced in the Australian colonies that the government not only conduct the post office, as in this and other countries, but control and manage almost entirely the railway and telegraph business and to these have added a system of state fire insurance. The latter branch is yet in the experimental stage, and has so far been adopted only by the colonies of New Zealand and Victoria. A like scheme has been entered upon to a limited extent in Germany also, and pensions for old age have been discussed both in Germany and Great Britain in a way that seems to open a prospect of legal provision being made for this service hereafter. It is clear that the civilized communities of the world have by no means reached a definite conclusion as to what services shall be hereafter carried on by government, but in the meantime the undoubted tendency is toward extension rather than curtailment. The contention on the one part is that the state can give a better, and probably both a better and cheaper service in many lines than is, or will be afforded by private or corporate enterprise. The post office is frequently cited as an evidence in support of this contention. But we find in our own country that the ownership and control of a railway system has not proved economical, or in any degree more successful than railway enterprises managed by companies. It has even been seriously proposed that our government shall dispossess itself of the Intercolonial and P. E. Island railways in order to be freed from loss and responsibility for which governments are inherently unfitted. No one, however, would go so far as to propose handing over the postal service to a company. Judging from what is going on in other countries we may safely assume that in Canada it will become before long a question whether the state shall not take over the telegraph and telephone systems and manage them as part and parcel of the postal service, to which they are by nature so closely allied. The government of Canada has now a system of life insurance for its own civil servants. From this there is but a step to undertaking a general life insurance business. And if life insurance may be undertaken and carried on by the state, why not fire insurance as well? No doubt the undertaking would be a formidable one, whether it were to be attempted with the companies still in the field, or by acquiring their rights and excluding them ultimately from further operation in the Dominion. In the case of a sweeping loss of ten millions by a single conflagration, as in case of the great fire in St. John a quarter century ago, the exigency might send the Finance Minister in haste across the Atlantic to negotiate a loan. The national credit might

even be impaired temporarily by one such a disaster.

It is clearly prudent to await further developments in the line of state socialism in other countries before Canada makes any bold ventures in taking over services now fairly well conducted by corporate institutions. Our civil service staff is already sufficiently cumbersome, and there is so much to do in opening up and developing our vast territorial area with its wealth of natural resources, that we would do well to go slowly in those matters in which the Australian and some other countries are so fearlessly experimenting.

The prohibition majority is coming up all the time now. The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, who has the best opportunities of knowing, now thinks there were 35,000 more votes that said "yes" than said "no" on 29th September.

The Transvaal has a little war on its hands with the revolting tribesmen in its northern districts, and there is a feeling of willingness in British South Africa to have the tribesmen make a prolonged fight. Already, with an army of 5,000 men in the field the Transvaal government has felt obliged to call out 3,000 more.

Kingston Whig wants to know why only two fifths of the people attend church? To which the London News replies: "Assuming the ordinary family to consist of five persons it is altogether probable that two of the five would be children of tender years, or babies in arms. It might also be surmised that one, if not two, of the five stay at home to cook dinner for the rest. Got any harder question?"

In twelve of the United States it is left to the jury in murder cases to determine whether the prisoner who is found guilty shall suffer death or be imprisoned for life. The disinclination of juries to condemn a prisoner to death no doubt leads in some cases to a failure of justices in countries where, as in Canada, capital punishment is provided for by law. Ohio last year adopted the plan above referred to and New Jersey is now contemplating the same course, showing that it is growing in favor, at least in the states of the great Republic.

Once in a while alarmist reports are sent out to the effect that Britain is fast losing ground in some branch of her trade, and it is most frequently asserted that in the iron trade her customers are being enticed away by the United States or by Germany. It is therefore gratifying to read in the London Economist that all the English makers are more or less fully employed, and are asking and obtaining higher prices, so great is the demand for iron, and especially steel. It is true that the United States has become the greatest producer of iron in the world, but this has been by natural expansion and increased demand at home and abroad, and with out decreasing the volume of iron and steel production in the Mother Country.

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WORLD'S WHEAT CROP.

Crop for 1898 is Estimated at 2,640 Million Bushels.

The Hungarian Minister of Agriculture has issued a commercial bulletin which has been used by the world's wheat crop of 1898. The B-ecolm estimate is equivalent to 2,640 million bushels of 60 lbs., in the grand total varying but little from the Hungarian official estimate. The wheat crop of India for 1898, as officially reported, amounted to 242,921,280 bushels, that of 1897 to 182,867,485 bushels, while the annual average for the previous five years was 226,446,080. Official figures on area show an increase of 689,172 acres in France, of 218,686 acres in the United Kingdom, 163,860 in Ontario, Canada, and 147,850 in Manitoba in areas under wheat. The estimate of production given in tables published with the report make the crop of 1898 the largest on record, but the world's reserve stocks had run extremely low before the harvest.

The French area under wheat was about four and one-quarter per cent, greater in 1898, and, taking wheat, rye, and ma-in together, the area increase amounted to 798,179 acres. The average yield of wheat this year was nearly 22 bushels per acre, against less than 15.2 in 1897. An official estimate for Hungary puts the wheat crop at 119,638,000 bushels, against 89,924,000 last year; rye, 38,154,000 bushels, against 35,151,000 bushels last year; barley, 61,446,000 bushels, against 41,475,000 bushels last year; oats, 84,041,000 bushels, against 58,881,000 bushels last year. The wheat crop of Roumania has been stated in English papers on the authority of an official estimate, 56,800,000 bushels, but some reports from that country represent that this estimate is too large by several million bushels. The offers of wheat from Roumania and Bulgaria are described as "rather extraordinarily restricted."—Montreal Herald.

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R. C. GOFF, L. C. WORTHY, WILLIAM TURNER, P. P. ARCHIBALD, Queen Hotel; ALEX. ANDER HORNE, W. B. ROBERTSON, Sheriff; SIMON W. CRABBE, A. I. JOHNSON, Pres. W.C.T.U.; Mrs. R. J. CAMPBELL. Oct 21—d&wlv

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