

that he is disinterested, that he has investigated, and that he knows that to which he certifies. These certificates are, however, very generally made by those who are either interested or have not investigated, and consequently either know to the contrary or do not know at all. On the other hand, the companies frequently entrust adjustments to local agents who are interested in the future patronage of the insured and his friends, or they have an interest in hiding the bad work they have done in forwarding the applications to their companies without warning; sometimes, however, the companies send inexperienced adjusters, some of whom fall among thieves, and some are more anxious to make salvage than they are to adjust.

It is the common interest of the public and the companies that adjustments should be lawful and right, and the common interest entails a common duty. But the common interest and the common duty are most forcibly illustrated in the matter of resistance to fraudulent claims;—this is the most difficult part of the whole work of the insurance companies, because juries generally, and some judges particularly, are unable to look at insurance cases without prejudice. Until they are educated to look upon an insurance contract just as they would upon any other contract, the companies must continue to pay fraudulent and exorbitant claims at the expense of the honest insured.

In every community there are persons who are interested in the moneys to be secured, or in the parties who are endeavoring to secure them, and these form a corps of canvassers by whose operations local opinion and local jurors are influenced, so that certificates and verdicts are readily obtained. The insurance company is a disembodied stranger for whom and by whom no local sympathies can be excited, so that unless and until insurance cases can be dealt with in some other way than by juries, there is little hope of justice being done to them, except it be by such skillful manipulation by counsel as will bring the whole matter up for review, and reformation of verdicts. To effect this the companies are driven to technical defences which do but intensify the feeling of the public and the judges against them.

We have endeavored to sketch the "proper functions of fire insurance companies," and trust the special and common interests of the companies and the public will be advanced thereby.

### THE TREATY CRAZE.

Mr. Paterson of Brant has been endeavoring to convince his colleagues in the House of Commons that the true remedy for the depression, caused by the overproduction of our manufactures, is "to enlarge our foreign markets." He wants "new and important markets opened up to Canadian producers," but he does not give the slightest clue to the mode of effecting his object, beyond a general declaration that if we had the power of negotiating treaties with foreign powers, we could easily accomplish the object. Surely it is only reasonable to ask the parties who, like Mr. Paterson and his admirer, the *Montreal Herald*, claim a right, which is wholly inconsistent with our position as a dependency, to name some one country with which we might hope to extend our relations and which would receive our manufactures. It is notorious that our best customer is Great Britain, and that, while Canada imposes heavy duties on her exports, she admits all our exports free of duty. Last year Great Britain took more than one-half of our exports.

Next on the list is the United States. It is well known what the views of those who control the Government of the United States are regarding Canadian reciprocity. If Canada were independent to-morrow we could not have greater facilities than we enjoy at present for negotiating a commercial treaty. Unfortunately there is a wide divergence of opinion on the subject. Canada succeeded in 1854 in getting the United States to agree to a treaty for the free admission of natural products into both countries respectively, in consideration of which she conceded the right of fishing in her waters. The United States abrogated that treaty, and has since refused to renew it, on more than one occasion. The ground taken is that manufactures should also be included, but when Canada, through the late Senator Brown, consented to include certain manufactures, he intimated that it would be necessary to make a similar concession to Great Britain. It is not surprising that the United States should be reluctant to enter into an agreement under which British manufactures would be admitted free into Canada, considering how easy it would be to transmit them across the border.

On the other hand it must be sufficiently obvious that if Canada were to attempt to discriminate against Great Britain in favor of the United States, it would be a virtual declaration in favor of

separation, and, if persevered in, would inevitably lead to that result. It has been suggested by the Hon. Wm. McDougall in a paper on Imperial Federation, recently published, that "to meet the objection that would no doubt be raised in England of a possible agreement to discriminate against British goods, it might be stipulated that no higher duties than were now levied on British goods should in any case be imposed without the express assent of the imperial authorities." This Mr. McDougall thinks "would meet and probably satisfy the demand for commercial freedom and commercial union which threatens to become a serious question in Canadian politics." We wholly fail to discover how the suggestion would affect the question. Let us suppose the present duties on British goods maintained and United States goods admitted free, will it be argued by any intelligent man that Great Britain would be satisfied? Canada, moreover, cannot afford to adopt discriminating duties.

The next country that we shall notice is the group of British West India Colonies. It is evidently believed by some that our commerce with those colonies could be extended by the adoption of free trade. We have repeatedly pointed out that there are no protective duties in the West Indies, and that the revenue duties do not interfere with consumption. What might possibly increase the small trade that exists at present, which is rather over 2 per cent of our exports, would be to discriminate in favor of West Indian exports in our tariff, on condition that our exports were admitted into the West Indies on more favorable terms than those of the United States. Even this would not accomplish Mr. Paterson's object, as Great Britain supplies all the tropical colonies with manufactures, and she certainly would not allow them to discriminate in our favor. It is at least doubtful whether she would allow discriminating duties against the United States, but even on the assumption that she would, it would be an act of insanity on the part of the British West Indies to compel the United States, now a good customer for their sugars, to retaliate by excluding them by high duties.

As regards the Spanish Colonies, we have supplied them, and will probably continue to do so, with fish and lumber, but their Mother Country, Spain, has protected her own industries, especially shipping, and is not likely to change her policy without a large consideration. The truth is that, so far from it being in the interest of Canada to have uncontrolled power in regard to treaties, she is