

WILD-CAT INSURANCE.

THAT spurious class of so-called insurance known as "wild-cat" is again developing with considerable violence in the Western States, especially in Missouri. The subject has been a good deal commented on in the local papers, often in a tone which does not convince the reader of its absolute impartiality. One correspondent says that this bogus insurance has invaded every county in Missouri, and is taking an enormous aggregate of money from thoughtless citizens to enrich men who are in most cases unprincipled adventurers, and in some instances the confessed graduates of penitentiaries. Several years ago a statute was enacted for the strict supervision of the business of insurance in Missouri. It operated well, and for a long time there was no insurance to be obtained in that state that was not based upon sound principles and backed by deposits of ample security. But the idea of cheap insurance fastened upon the old-established benevolent societies. They formulated the assessment plan to suit their various compositions, and widely adopted it. The very nature of their plan made it impracticable for them to conform to the requirements of the Missouri Insurance law. Their united influence easily secured a qualifying statute which excepted charitable associations from the supervision of the Insurance Department. That statute went into effect two years ago. Since then the organisation of ostensibly charitable companies has become epidemic in the state. Not one in twenty of them has really any other purpose than the private gain of the three or four persons who organized them. And it is only within the last two years that vigorous warfare has been made upon such concerns elsewhere. As a result, during the last few months a lot of scamps, says this correspondent, who have been driven from other states have started numerous wild-cat insurance schemes in Missouri. Some obtain charters here. Others falsely claim to be chartered in other states. Many do business without the faintest pretext of legal authority, and all claim to be benevolent, and never fail to have some synonym for charity forming part of the title under which they operate. Some offers premiums upon marriage, others upon births. Almost without exception the wild-cat concerns promise more than can possibly be performed. For instance, a certain Indianapolis management devotes itself to iron-workers, and has six branches among the laborers in this city. It promises that at the end of seven years' membership it will pay the member four dollars for every one dollar he invests. Another promises to pay at the end of a year \$1,000 for an investment of \$20.25. Such concerns, palpable frauds though they be, are flourishing and are rapidly making their managers wealthy. None of them are licenced by the Insurance Department. They work stealthily and have high-sounding references, and by means of glib solicitors entrap

people who do not take the trouble to figure out the mathematical impossibility which enters into most of their specious undertakings. The Insurance Department is trying to banish these wild-cat schemes from the state, but their prosecution under the present law is only partially successful. Most of the judges of the Missouri courts, this bold writer goes on to say, belong to one or another organisation which carries on co-operative insurance. They are necessarily inclined to give a very liberal construction to every scheme that can show even the color of benevolence. More potent than any other influence, however, is the fact that a mania for co-operative insurance is upon the people of Missouri just now. We have, fortunately, nothing to compare with the above in this country. The insurance rascalities perpetrated here are for the most part confined to the coercion of policyholders by means of threats of costly litigation which the latter are powerless long to sustain.

THE LATE RAILWAY FUSION.

ONE of the great English "railway kings," Mr. W. ABBOTT, has arrived in Canada with the view of examining into our railroads and into the country as a field for the investment of capital on a large scale. This gentleman takes a special interest in the late amalgamation between the Grand Trunk and Great Western, and went personally into an investigation of its merits while in Ontario a few days ago. The outcome of his inquiries is that the anticipated saving of one million dollars a year, the sum named by Sir HENRY TYLER, is an underestimate, and that the economy effected by the fusion will be even more considerable. Mr. ABBOTT is of opinion, too, that there is no intention whatever of raising rates, while the public will in every way be in future better served than it has ever been in the past. In a word, he thoroughly endorses the views of the real originator of the scheme, Mr. HICKSON, the General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway, who has already brought round many of his most formidable late antagonists to a participation in his own views. We have not yet learned the opinion of Mr. ABBOTT regarding the attractions of this country from a capitalistic point.

REPLY POSTAL CARDS.

THE English Postmaster-General appears to be giving the Department he administers the fullest development of which it is capable. It is unquestionable, too, that all the recent innovations are greatly to the benefit of the entire people, from the highest to the lowest. The latest novelty is the new postal-reply cards, which will commence to circulate at the beginning of October next. The cards are to have an impressed stamp of one-halfpenny (one cent) on each half. The address only is to be written, printed, or otherwise impressed on that side of either half which bears the stamp, and no part of the address must cross

the stamp. The "return half" will be affixed to the other half in such a way as to be easily severed from it. No reply postcard or "return half" will be forwarded through the post which contains any words, marks or designs of an indecent, obscene, libellous, or grossly offensive character, and any card or "half" so posted which shall *prima facie* fall within this prohibition, shall be stopped and submitted to the inspection of an officer duly authorised in that behalf by the Postmaster-General. We understand that the Washington authorities are about immediately to adopt this excellent arrangement.

THE REVENUE.

THE following statement shows the Customs and Excise revenue of the Dominion for the months of August 1881 and 1882:

	Aug. 1881.	Aug. 1882.
Customs.....	\$2,021,115 64	\$2,422,789 71
Excise.....	443,697 84	520,042 99
Customs increase for Aug. 1882.....		\$401,674 07
Excise increase for Aug. 1882.....		76,345 15
Total increase.....		\$478,019 22

Revenue for the two months ending 31st August, 1881, and the two months ending 31st August, 1882:—

	July and Aug. 1881.	July and Aug. 1882.
Customs.....	\$3,503,099 51	\$4,210,487 36
Excise.....	837,665 75	985,250 30
Customs increase for July and Aug. 1882.....		\$707,387 85
Excise increase for July and Aug. 1882.....		147,584 55
Total increase for July and August, 1882.....		\$854,972 40

This statement is once more very satisfactory. The receipts from other sources than Customs and Excise during the month of August, 1881, were \$418,596, and for August, 1882, \$512,189. The total from all sources for August, 1881, was \$2,883,409, and for August, 1882, \$3,455,021, showing an increase of \$571,612. The receipts from other sources than Customs and Excise for the two months, July and August, 1881, were \$836,721, and for the same months in 1882, \$793,367. The falling off was caused almost entirely by the abolition of bill stamps. The total from all sources for the two months in 1881 was \$5,177,486, and in 1882, \$5,989,104, showing an increase of \$811,618.

MEXICO AND THE U. S.—RECIPROCITY.

The Americans are making strong efforts to arrange a reciprocity treaty with Mexico. The Mexican system of Custom-house exactions is certainly annoying. A producer of ore, for instance, has to pay tax first to the commune, next to the State, then to the General Government, and if the articles pass through other States on their way to the point of export, more for each of them. Besides the regular taxes, soldiers have to be engaged to guard the ore. A reciprocity treaty would enable the States to draw a large quantity of silver from that country, as well as develop trade in American products. England has now a strong hold on the Mexican market, and of course our neighbours want to oust her from possession.