

States \$5,494,500; while in this class of risks the insurance companies doing business in Canada have sustained an increased loss of \$3,813,600, and in the United States of \$2,069,400. The number of fires during the first nine months of the year was 7,728, an average of about one fire every fifty minutes. The specials burned during the same period numbered 4,030.

In view of the keen competition in insurance business, and the "undercutting" which has taken place, the above figures are very significant. The lesson they convey to the companies is to be extremely careful in the conduct of their business, and not allow competition and the desire to do business to lead them into the folly of taking risks at a lower rate than experience shows to be commensurate with the risk assumed. To insurers they teach the lesson that they should deal only with first class companies, who do business on sound principles. They cannot expect to be insured against loss by fire unless they are willing to pay a fair rate for it.

The increase noted is of course largely due to the "hard times," and it is to be observed that there is a large increase in the number of incendiary fires. It is to be hoped that, with returning prosperity, the losses from this cause will decrease, but we think it would be well if insurance companies in fixing rates would take into greater consideration the moral character of the risk.

#### ADVERTISING FRAUDS.

It is wonderful how many gullible people there are in the world. Frauds of all kinds appear to flourish, and brains which could and should be employed in something useful, are set to work to devise new means by which their possessors may become enriched at the expense of a too confiding public. There are always a number of people who will not work, as long as they can make a livelihood by other means. One section of this class is engaged in devising schemes by which they may sweep into their coffers the money of those who bite at the bait which they offer, while another section constitute their victims. Those who concoct these swindles will, we presume, exist so long as there are any of the class remaining who desire to attain a competence by other means than the good old way of honest industry, pluck and perseverance.

These remarks are suggested by the fact that many newspapers, considered respectable, for the sake of a few paltry dollars, aid swindlers and lottery men in their operations by advertising for them. In this country lotteries are illegal, and

newspapers which publish their advertisements are liable to a heavy penalty. We have frequently to refuse such advertisements, and we sometimes wonder how any paper which professes to be a guardian of the public interests, can descend to assist in perpetrating such palpable frauds as most of these schemes are. We would like to see our contemporaries a little more careful in this respect.

We observe an advertisement at present in some of our leading journals, offering lots of "Romaine gold" jewellery for sums of money varying from fifty cents to five dollars. What this "Romaine gold" may be we do not know, but it is probably brass, which is the principal stock in trade of those who deal in such wares. To those who stop for a moment to consider, it must be apparent that on the true principles of trade it is out of the question for any one to give such quantities of goods, if they are worth anything, for such a small sum; and though those who deal in them profess to be very benevolent, their liberality has not reached such a point that they are prepared to give away their goods to strangers without making at least a fair living profit on them. Yet we have no doubt hundreds of persons reply to these advertisements, and find out, when it is too late, that while they buy they have also been sold.

Another common swindle is that known as "puts and calls," advertised by irresponsible brokers, who generally assume a name similar in sound to that of some respectable firm. By representing it as a "sure thing," many who know nothing whatever about stocks are induced to invest, and afterwards find out to their sorrow that the only one who has a "sure thing" is the fellow who has got possession of their money which they never see again.

We would caution our readers against having anything to do with these swindles, which, under all sorts of plausible guises, are so freely advertised now-a-days. Buyer as well as seller should remember that "honesty is the best policy."

#### OUR AMUSEMENTS.

When during its declining years people remarked as to the scanty patronage extended to the old Theatre Royal on Côté street, which still remains there a dingy monument of departed joys, it was replied that Montreal had no suitable place of amusement, that the then temple was in an obscure street, and that nothing but a star of the first magnitude or the presence of vice-royalty itself would induce people to visit such a place. When the Academy of Music was opened two years ago, some people there were who said, as they do of the Windsor Hotel now, that it was too far from the centre of population, that some spot near Victoria square, should have been chosen

for a fitting temple of the muses. The new establishment was certainly worthy of Montreal, and it was patronized as no such place was ever before patronized in this city. A first-class stock company varied by occasional "stars" catered for the amusement of the people right royally, and visitors from American cities were wont to say that it was equal to anything to be seen on the other side of the line. The directors and shareholders were, or should have been, satisfied with their venture. We have been informed that they realized about 18½ per cent. last year, before McDowell's departure. The difficulty has been to get a man who combined in himself the three characters of caterer, manager and actor. Two of these together are not very unusual, but the third is a calling apart, and of this the directors should be convinced. We do not speak here of the character of many of the plays put on the stage, nor what is implied in the misnomer given the temple, but of its failure this season to promote the double object of the directors, a first-class theatre for the public and a good investment for themselves. The troubles of the present week may possibly bring some of the parties to their senses; not least the two young men who invested their salary savings in a partnership in the lease and management of the concern last summer. We imagine the commercial editor of the *Montreal Gazette* has spent more time and money, especially in trying to forward the interests of himself and partners, known as "Morris & Co.," than he is likely to devote again to the mimic stage, the box office, or behind the scenes. But the last straw that broke the camel's back was added at the beginning of the present week. During the visit of an American company last week, who drew good houses but took the cream away with them to the States, the local company, managed by Morris, Warner, White and Co., went to Ottawa, the young men advancing \$200 to help the move. On Monday last Morris returned with \$70 all told, and instead of making his appearance in the role assigned him that evening, chose to test his versatility in other temples. But better drop the curtain. There's a dissolution of partnership, and there are two disgusted young men who wish, among other things, they had taken a lesson from the shrewd old director whose constant nightly attendance at the foot-lights is not so much for ornament or to seek after amusement, as for his rent of \$50 a night, cash down.

#### THE GLOBE MUTUAL vs. THE SUN MUTUAL.

The public will be interested to know the cause of the action for heavy damages entered a few days ago by the Globe Mutual Life Insurance Co. of New York against the Sun Mutual Life Insurance Co. of Montreal. In a circular recently issued by the Sun, headed "Inducements to insure in this Company," a comparative table appears in which are given the so-called "gross premium income, expenditure exclusive of dividends to policy holders, ratio of expenditure to premium income and percentage reserved for future claims and dividends" of seven American Life Insurance Companies doing business in Canada, and under these the figures of the Sun Mutual, the entire exhibit not