

cases they have lost houses, live stock, and in fact everything they possessed. In one case a family of seven persons were hemmed in and burnt to death. The small village of Bagot, in a wooded district west of Portage la Prairie, was also burned by a prairie and bush fire, but no lives were lost in that region.

The mayor of Ottawa and the members for Prescott and Russell counties have sent a circular letter to the mayors of various towns and cities stating that the fearful fire which ravaged 300 square miles of Russell and Prescott counties last week "has resulted in the loss of five lives, rendered 2,000 people homeless, and destroyed farms, dwellings, stores, churches, schools, and property generally to the value of thousands of dollars. Relief is urgently needed for the sufferers." The Ontario Government has made a grant of \$5,000, and several cities have also contributed. It is estimated that from \$50,000 to \$100,000 will be needed to avert hunger and destitution over the district ravaged by these bush fires. All the region around Saint Sauveur, in the St. Jerome district, is terribly damaged by bush fires also.

A HASTY ASSIGNMENT.

We now hear of the assignment of A. E. Rondot, of Amherstburg. His assignee is Mr. J. G. Hay, of Toronto, who has sent a man up to take charge. No particulars are obtainable of the condition of his estate, but he is understood to owe about \$20,000. This assignment is probably the result of a suit brought against Rondot last month by W. B. Hamilton, for the balance of a compromised claim; and this suit was taken on the strength of the admissions made by Rondot in the box, on the occasion of his suing THE MONETARY TIMES for libel, the other day. But this assignment lessens the hopes of those, ourselves included, who have claims against him for goods or costs.

It has been our fortune during the last thirty years to have suffered several times in a like manner; namely, to have been sued by an occasional impecunious man, who deemed himself aggrieved by something said about him in THE MONETARY TIMES, and when we had justified ourselves before the law, as in the case of this Essex merchant, Rondot, we had the poor satisfaction of paying our own costs because they could not be collected from the estate of the plaintiff. These are unpleasant circumstances, but they are the lot of a journal which dares to say unpalatable things for the sake of preserving a decent standard of commercial morality.

Correspondence.

FOREST FIRES.

Editor MONETARY TIMES:
SIR,—I wish to call your attention to the Russell county fires, Casselman and South Nation, and the other villages. Most of those villages were well supplied with literature, showing that protective machines could be had cheap, but it seems almost impossible to get them woke up to the necessity of fire prevention. As many of your readers are not aware of values of modern fire-fighting appliance, I deem it wise to let you know that a hand fire engine, all complete, can be had for \$150 (this includes the suction hose), and from that up to \$300. In fact, you may advise your readers that fire appliance is now so cheap that merchants in country villages can buy them individually. In a village

like Casselman, or South Indian, two fire engines, costing \$300 each, would have saved the town, and the whole outfit, reels and hose, would have cost less than \$1,000. Reels \$100 each, or in round numbers \$3,000, would give them class E outfit and a foundation for D. Mildmay is a sample of what a small village can do. That village of 900 population is enjoying D rating, simply because they were people of good judgment, and no boodlers got into their camp to prevent their getting fire protection. I saw a London engine from a spring puddle of water in a village in Manitoba save a \$25,000-elevator and the C.P.R. station from burning down, while a similar one close to them burnt up; no buckets could get near either, but this little machine kept both wet and saved them. A steamer could do no more. If steam fire engines are wanted, they can be had at from \$1,600 to \$3,000, or even \$6,000. So there is no excuse for not having protection.

I simply wish to give you powder to fan up some of those "put off" people, and let the world know that with the present price of appliances no one need go without protection, nor need the papers chronicle such scenes as Russell county presents, if the people would only prepare for it. I think I have shown you clearly that those villages can blame themselves for their unhappy position to-day.

Yours truly,
CANADIAN.

London, 8th October, 1897.

UNREADINESS FOR FIRE.

Editor MONETARY TIMES:

SIR,—I have taken a notion to write to you on the subject of the way that people in the smaller places in Canada tempt Providence. I mean by that that the councilmen or the people of the place care nothing whatever about the risks of fire, and do not do anything to make preparations against the day of fire. They say, "We are all right, and have been all right, and have not had a fire for ten years, so we do not have any need to get fire appliances, at a great cost to keep up."

I say it is a sin, and a shame to talk like this. The very first thing the village selectmen or councillors should do when the people of the place have spent good money to put up stores and dwellings, and churches and schoolhouses, is to make some arrangement to keep the fires that will come from burning up the property in the place.

Now, sir, I hope you will speak out on this subject. I know your paper goes to many people in many places. I hope you will argue the case; show them how foolish they are to leave things to chance, as they do. And tell them that it is money well invested to put money into waterworks or fire engines. I know that people in some towns kick because they are charged too much insurance by the insurance men, and they don't propose to be bullied by the insurance companies. And I don't blame these places altogether, because it seems to me the more the insurance men get the more they always want.

But I have been in places (and more than one or two or three) that have been fairly swept by fire, and no waterworks nor fire engines in them—hardly a bucket or a ladder to make a fight against the fire with. When I think of Magog in this province, and two or three more places in Ontario that I have been in, just after a big fire that has broken the hearts of the business men, it makes me hot to see so much carelessness. And now this terrible Casselman and South Nation business and bush fires, and no protection at all! It is a necessity to get folks roused up somehow.

J. MCKITTRICK.

Sherbrooke, Oct. 8th, 1897.

Japan is to have an oil trust—a genuine, up-to-date, all-embracing oil trust. The discoveries of adequate fields of petroleum, the extensive demand for the product, not only in Japan, but throughout all Asiatic countries, and the remunerative price which the oil commands, has suggested the formation of a syndicate to control the entire output. Such a syndicate or trust is about to be organized in Tokio. In other words, Japan is to be fully initiated into the most advanced product of Western civilization.—*Oil and Drug Reporter.*

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