

manipulated. They are, moreover, cheaply transported. Indeed, it is estimated by Mr. Berry White, of Bengal, that by 1890 the entire crop of Indian tea will be laid down in London at a cost of 6d. per pound or under, while the cost of this year's Foochow crop, teas inferior to the Indian, was 9d. per pound. These facts and figures show what havoc may be caused to a great industry by carelessness in some particulars and dishonesty in others. And they teach, on the other hand, the success that may be achieved by perseverance in prudent methods and in the liberal and enlightened policy of government.

A DAY AFTER THE FAIR.

Much has been said and written upon the importance to Canada of regular steam communication from harbor ports with the West Indies and South America. Memorials and deputations to Ottawa; lectures and essays before boards of trade; visits of maritime people to the west; speeches, committee meetings, editorials—all have been expended upon the subject of a line of steamers of our own to West India ports, with a small Government subsidy, in order that both Canada's mails and her goods should not be at the mercy of foreign carriers and agents. Everybody agreed as to the desirableness of such a scheme; many thought that "it must be done, it was sure to come"; and a few made vain attempts to get subscribers to a company for the purpose. What has been the outcome of it all? We have been able to discover no outcome whatever, either in the direction of Government assistance or private action. But it is with some bitterness of spirit, we should think, that the people of the maritime ports and their friends in the west who had taken an interest in the proposal now read the following despatch from Washington, relating to the proceedings of the American House, published in United States journals under date June 15th:

"The Post Office Appropriation Bill was taken up, amended, and passed. Among the amendments agreed to is the inserting of an item of \$800,000 for more efficient mail service between the United States and Central and South America and the West Indies."

There it is. The older and richer country, perceiving the importance of that market, will now provide greater facilities, and will continue to carry both our mails and our products. Small blame to them. Manufacturers care not who carries their goods; loyalty will not supersede business considerations. The early bird will catch the worm, and the enterprising Yankee shipper, duly subsidised to the extent of \$800,000, will get the freight. But there will not likely be much Canadian freight amongst it. "We are sorry," our legislators and easy-going shippers will say; but their sorrow comes too late.

—Half-yearly dividends have been declared by the Nova Scotia Sugar Refinery of five per cent., and by the Moncton Gas and Water Co. of four per cent.; both payable in July.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS.

THE QUEEN v. J. C. AYER & Co.—Judgment by the Exchequer Court has been given against the Government with costs, the confiscated goods to be returned to Ayer & Co. This was an action arising out of a seizure by the Customs authorities of 4,349 dozen bottles of sarsaparilla at various points in the Dominion, manufactured by these celebrated medicine makers. The information acted on was given by a discharged employee of the firm, and the detectives who did the work were O'Hara and Brosseau. Ayer & Co. have had a branch of their Massachusetts business at St. John, N.B., for twenty-six years and they import nothing but the raw drugs in preparing their patent compounds; yet the manufactured articles were seized as being imported at an undervalue. The strictures of Chief Justice Ritchie were very severe on the detectives and informant, and his exoneration of the business men complete. The latter had learned from the Customs authorities the terms upon which the goods should be imported and the invoices showed that the goods had been imported in bulk and duty paid in those terms, and the manufactured article, it was held, had no market value beyond that of the ingredients imported. The charge of smuggling the learned Chief Justice thought monstrous. The evidence showed that the goods were rather overvalued than undervalued.

INSURANCE AGENTS.

COMMUNICATED.

There are in this city a certain number of fire insurance agents who devote their whole time to canvassing for business for the company or companies which they represent. The insurance business, as a rule, is their sole means of livelihood, and therefore they are the only real *bona fide* insurance agents. There is, however, a host of other persons, who, in the course of their ordinary business, manage to induce those who require insurance to allow the solicitors to place it in order that they (the latter) may obtain a commission on the premium. Such persons are barnacles on the business of insurance. They know very little, if anything, about the business, and care less, if they can only manage to obtain the commission which of right should go to persons whose whole time is devoted to insurance. Insurance agents proper are of necessity better qualified to make out a proper application, one that will properly cover the property sought to be insured. I contend that it would be well, therefore, for persons seeking insurance either on real or personal property to place it with the regularly appointed agent of a company rather than to give it to a scalper who has no interest whatever in the transaction beyond the prospective commission he is hungering for.

There is another practice more reprehensible, if possible, than that considered above, and this is illustrated in cases, which I trust are rare, in which the applicant for insurance dickers with the agent for dividing with him a portion of his commission, assuring him that other agents will do it if he will not. Rather than lose the risk the poor agent sometimes yields. This practice on the part of the assured is very small business, and should bring a blush of shame upon him when he receives his policy, the face of which falsely shows the premium paid by him at from five to ten per cent. greater than he actually paid. "Live and let live" should be the rule in such a matter. No honorable

man, who considered the matter aright, will stoop to do so mean a transaction as getting the insurance agent to divide with him his hard-earned living.

The insurance companies, in their anxiety to increase their business, are sometimes not altogether blameless in this matter. Not content with the amount of business their regularly appointed agent or agents are able to secure, they appoint a number of sub-agents with the view of increasing business. Many of these know nothing of insurance beyond pocketing the commission.

Another grievance under which the legitimate insurance agents labour is the number of bank agents, managers of loan companies, real estate agents, and lawyers that claim commission on all insurance business passing through their hands, or which they can control. One or two of the loan companies are exceptions. One Toronto company, for example, neither accepts nor will allow any manager or an employee either to claim or receive commission. Managers of loan companies are usually well paid, and they should be the last persons that would deprive the regular insurance agent of any part of his legitimate income by claiming a part of his commission.

Probably, however, the worst grievance of all is the appointment by a company of a grain merchant or one of his employees, or the book-keeper of a large firm, as an agent in order to obtain for one company the whole of their business. This matter of shared commissions is now seriously engrossing the attention of the *bona fide* insurance agents of Toronto, and it is to be hoped that something will be done to prevent the complete demoralization of the insurance business.

INSURANCE.

Toronto, 27th June, 1888.

INSURANCE NOTES.

The Nova Scotia Marine and Ocean Marine insurance companies, of Halifax, have decided to continue in business as marine underwriters. The Merchants' Marine Insurance Company, of the same city, is now winding up.

Samuel Mick, the Portage la Prairie, Man., fire bug, gets five years in the penitentiary. The evidence against White was insufficient for conviction.

For the time during which Mr. W. Plender looked after the interests of the English creditors of the Briton Medical Life Association in this country, he asks a remuneration of \$18 per day. But the court holds that Mr. Plender was nothing more than a clerk from the head office of the association, that he acted in a partial manner, and that his services could have been performed by an office clerk at \$400 per annum. The judge, therefore, allowed payment at the rate of \$7 per day. Creditors are now anxiously awaiting the declaration of a dividend.

Representatives of the Mutual Insurance Companies who were in session in London last week have resolved to petition the Government for amendments to the law relating to the use of threshing engines and other steam machinery on farms, to have the engines placed in charge of competent men, and to make such other regulations as may be necessary for the protection of life and property.

The Sun Life Insurance Company, of Canada, gives notice of a six per cent. half-yearly dividend, payable on and after July 3rd.