

THE ALASKAN BOUNDARY DECISION.

The United States scores another diplomatic triumph by the decision of the Alaskan Boundary Commission. The award will not tend to enhance the respect of Canada for tribunals so constituted when her interests are at stake. The decision was protested against by the Canadian Commissioners, Sir Louis Jette and Mr. Aylesworth, K.C., leaving the room at the Foreign Office before the President, Lord Alverstone and the three American Commissioners, Messrs. Lodge, Root and Turner affixed their signatures to the decision. Without a map it is impossible to explain the purport, or show the effect of this judgment. It practically puts Canadian Alaska in a back yard, to which the front entrances are all blocked against the free entrance of the owner and his tenants, who, to reach their domiciles, will have to find their way through a distant and circuitous side entrance.

The opening left to Canada for access to Alaska is the Portland Canal situated a short distance north of Fort Simpson which is named as the terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The necessity now arises for a railway to run through northern British Columbia to Dawson City. One compensating feature in this event is regarded to be the removal of a source of irritation between the United States and this Dominion. Much is being made of this by some of our English contemporaries, who may exaggerate its importance in this respect. Other writers regard the victory of the United States in this dispute as another sacrifice of Canada to Great Britain's desire to keep on good terms with the United States. Were this made clear, and became the conviction of the people of this Dominion, it would rankle as a sore for years. That an English Chief Justice, one of such distinguished reputation for uprightness as Lord Alverstone, should render a decision contrary to the evidence for political effect is, to us, incredible. The value of the territory now formally ceded to the United States is neither large nor ever likely to be. The entire population of this immense area is estimated to be about 7,000 to 10,000. The value to Canada would have been, chiefly, a convenient entrance to the Klondyke for passengers and freight. Let us hope that the irritation over this disappointment will quickly subside and prompt measures taken to counteract the blocking against us of the leading channel to the Yukon by a railway through our own territory.

DOMINION COAL COMPANY.

The lease of above company to the Dominion Iron & Steel Company has been practically cancelled, the agreement to this effect only requiring the ratification of the Nova Scotia Legislature which Mr. Murray, the Premier, states will be granted in due course. In a recent interview Mr. James Ross, president of the Coal Company, stated that the directors propose to resume payment of dividends from the 1st inst.

The income received under the lease to the Iron & Steel Company being withdrawn the dividends to be paid by the Coal Co., will be drawn from the business. Although Mr. Ross regards the earnings as showing profits of 8 per cent. on the stock he is prepared to recommend a dividend of 6 per cent. per annum in which the other directors will concur. As indicated the dividend due 1st inst., though delayed owing to recent circumstances will ultimately be paid.

THE LATE MR. EDGAR P. ACKERMAN.

One of the best informed and brightest writers on the "Insurance Press" passed away by the death, on 10th inst., of Mr. Edgar P. Ackerman, Brooklyn, N.Y. For some time he was a contributor to THE CHRONICLE. He had a special faculty for composing pithy, wise and homorous paragraphs which are scattered over the pages of several journals to whom he contributed for many years under the pen-names of "Agate," "Matthew Marvel," "Henney Jaines," "Inspector Barnes," etc. We extend our condolences to the bereaved relatives.

NATIONAL BOARD FIRE STATISTICS.

It is a significant fact that the statistics compiled by the National Board of Fire Underwriters quoted by "The Coast Review," show that the average percentage of losses to amount at risk, in this country, is less now than formerly. In other words, the "burning line" is falling rather than rising, as has been the general impression. Since 1894 the percentage of losses to amount at risk has been less than the average since 1860.

The ratios of losses and premiums to \$100 of risks by both American and foreign companies have been as follows:

	Losses to \$100 of Risks.	Premi- to \$100 of Risks.
1860-70 incl.	.4655	...
1871-80 "	.5060	.9432
1881-90 "	.4870	.9880
1891	.4907	.9790
1892	.5133	1.0444
1893	.5723	1.0916
1894	.5328	1.1145
1895	.4744	1.0905
1896	.4496	1.0665
1897	.3882	1.0184
1898	.4217	.9656
1899	.4817	.9744
1900	.4647	1.0036
1901	.4515	1.0605
1860-1901	.4819	1.0040

The ratio of expenses, averaging 35.09, has risen from 31.06 to 37.45. In 1898 it was 39.35. Ratio of commissions has risen from 11.32 to 20.76.

The ratio of taxes to premiums increased from 2.20 in 1892 to 3.24 in 1900. The ratio of taxes to premiums less losses was 5.96 in 1892, 10.35 in 1899, and 8.80 in 1900.

What is the explanation of the great losses in fire