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### THE Insurance and Finance Chronicle.

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SIX MONTHS AGO, when the Montreal city council, in a spasm of economy, decided to ignore the insurance companies and let the city property go unprotected from fire loss, we pointed out the probable expensiveness of such economy, and the violation of their obligation as guardians of the people's property on the part of the aldermen responsible for the refusal to insure it. The probable has happened, and by the burning of the Bonsecours market on the 3rd instant, several thousand dollars of the city property went up in smoke. Fortunately for the insurance companies they were not 'in it'; unfortunately for the people of the city, they were, thanks to their penny-wise and pound-foolish misrepresentatives in the city council. The city guardians have been at least partially converted from their unfortunate error, and are now willing to insure to the extent of \$335,000, including \$150,000 on the City Hall and excluding the fire and police stations. This is nothing like an adequate amount of protection, but it is good as far as it goes, and concedes the important principle that a city no more than an individual can afford to carry its own risk. The rates charged by the fire offices will no doubt be in accordance with the reduced amount of insurance.

AN IMPORTANT CASE, involving the liability of a railway company for the burning of property contiguous to its line, has recently been decided by Mr. Justice Brooks in the Supreme Court at Sherbrooke. The plaintiffs in the case were the Guardian, the Scottish Union, the Fire Insurance Association, and the Hartford insurance companies, and the defendant the Quebec Central Railway company. The fire in question occurred in the shipyard of Mr. Davie, near Levis, resulting in a loss of about \$8,000. The companies mentioned were insurers, and paid the loss,

taking subrogation under the rights of the owner against the railway company. The fire occurred on the St. Charles branch of the Intercolonial Railway, over which line the Quebec Central had control for the running of trains. The defense of the latter company was that they did not cause the fire; or if they did they were not liable, inasmuch as they used in running their trains the most approved appliances to guard against the setting of fires along their line. The judge overruled the plea, and gave judgment in favor of the insurance companies. No little credit is due to Mr. C. D. Hanson, adjuster of this city, for the manner in which this case has been handled.

ON ANOTHER PAGE we print the statistics of the business of the American life companies operating in foreign countries for 1891, as given in the Connecticut Insurance Report, to which we have added the totals for 1890 by way of comparison. The insurance commissioner of that State indulges in some severe criticism, as he has done heretofore, on the wisdom of transacting this foreign business, and even suggests that the American companies be compelled by law to confine their operations to the healthy portions of North America. This or something else has called out a statement from Actuary McClintock of the Mutual Life, in which he says:—

The experience of the Mutual Life abroad enables me to state emphatically that, as regards mortality, the company is a gainer by reason of its foreign transactions, and not a loser, as the critics seem to hope. The extra charges for climate risk in Mexico and other tropical regions have been more than sufficient to cover such extra death loss as has been experienced in those countries, and the foreign business on which no extra has been charged shows a lighter death loss in proportion than its business in the United States.

We pointed out a year ago that the experience of the New York Life and the Equitable was said to have shown the same results as above stated. Mr. McClintock is a man who deals in facts and figures, and his positive statement certainly outweighs loose criticism.

THAT CERTAIN PARTIES in Great Britain are a good deal more solicitous for the adoption by the government of some scheme of old-age pensions than the intended beneficiaries are to have it done we have all along contended. There appears pretty striking evidence of this fact, we think, in a statement recently