

portant section of Ontario, and we hesitate not to express the belief that the day will come when the shores of the four beautiful lakes in the Muskoka district will be crowded with an industrious population, and their waters enjoy a commerce which few at present anticipate.

THE LATE FIRE NEAR OTTAWA.

The late fire in the Ottawa district has formed a new chapter in the experience of the mutual fire insurance companies; it shows that their peculiar field is subject to hazards which have hitherto formed no element in their calculations. To have the greater portion of an entire county laid in ashes at one swoop—barns, houses, fences, trees, live stock, and even human life, falling a prey to the flames—is something that is evidently not anticipated in the low rates and otherwise easy terms of insurance offered by the agricultural companies. The Ottawa fire is an exception to all the previous experience in this line of insurance in Canada.

As before mentioned, several of the Mutual Companies are considerable losers by this fire; but the brunt of the loss falls on the Beaver and Toronto of this city, which seems to have been doing an extensive business in the district of country devastated. The extent of losses is not yet known, but they were, without doubt, very heavy. In this contingency, the directors have very properly come forward with the honest and explicit statement of the case, elsewhere presented. They have determined on a large assessment of the premium notes held, which, we are glad to say, will prove ample, after making every allowance, to pay the losses now incurred, and preserve the Company's position intact. It is to be hoped that the members of the Company will respond promptly to the call made upon them to meet the exigencies of this calamity, which no one could have foreseen, and which no human power could have averted.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENTS.—“Shareholder” Toronto, writes:—“Kindly oblige many of your subscribers with an opinion as to the advisability of placing Judges on Boards of Direction for public companies. Take a case. A certain Judge is one of the Directors, and another Director is also the professional legal adviser of a company. Some matter arises which involves litigation. At the Board the matter is fully discussed between the Judge and the company's counsel. At the trial the Judge (‘His Lordship’ or ‘His Honor,’ as the case may be,) sits to adjudicate on points and circumstances which he had previously discussed privately with the learned counsel. No objection can be made to the position of the legal adviser; but, query, should the Judge be an interested party to a suit,

could it be felt with confidence that he occupied the bench as an impartial and unbiassed expounder of the law and its application. Even if stockholders were complimentary enough to put a Judge in the position of Director, might not his acceptance be unfavorably viewed. Under any circumstances one could not imagine his canvassing and seeking for the post.”

If there are such cases as that stated by our correspondent, we cannot imagine that a Judge should occupy the bench under such circumstances, for, whatever his judgment might be, his motives would be open to suspicion. However valuable the advice and aid of our Judges might be in the management of public companies, we would prefer to see them avoid such entangling connections.

“Constant Reader,” Montreal.—Your letter is lengthy. Were it not open to objection on that score we do not think it fair to attack an individual company, even for the laudable purpose of illustrating a general principle. We defer to no one in zeal for the progress of life insurance, believing it to be one of the most beneficent provisions that modern science and ingenuity have given to the world, for the prevention of distress, and the alleviation of the calamity which death often proves to helpless dependents; but at the same time, we shall not hesitate to point out the flaws in any system, or indeed, in any company, if the public interest is endangered thereby, even if in so doing we expose ourselves to the charge of speaking against life insurance itself. It may not be possible always to prevent charges of that kind being made, but we are quite certain we shall never deserve them.

MONTREAL MINING COMPANY.—The Montreal Mining Co's properties on Lakes Superior and Huron, consisting of 107,000 acres of land, have been disposed of to an American company for the sum of \$225,000. The terms, says the Montreal Herald, are \$50,000 cash; \$50,000 payable in June, 1871; \$50,000 in July, 1872; and \$75,000 on September the 30th the same year, with interest at 6 per cent. per annum. This will entitle each shareholder to about \$5.50. The original shareholders who have paid all the calls to date, and computing the amount paid at 7 per cent interest, will have paid for their shares from \$50 to \$60 each. We hope the change of ownership may lead to the development of this valuable property. Should the enterprise prove a complete success in the hands of the new owners, a powerful stimulus will be given to the extension of mining industry in that region.

THE Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, has permanently established an agency here under the management of Mr. R. W. Gale. This is one of the most progressive of American life companies, and stands in the front rank in respect of the amount of business done. We shall take another opportunity of alluding to its very creditable history and its financial position.

—The Royal Canadian Bank has commenced issuing four dollar bills—a denomination not heretofore issued by this Bank.

Insurance.

INSURANCE MATTERS IN MONTREAL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

MONTREAL, Sept. 5, 1870.

AUG. 30.—A slight fire occurred at about 9 p.m., at A. Laflamme's, trunk-maker, No. 120 St. Joseph street, arising from pure carelessness, in feeding a patent safety lamp with benzine while burning. By prompt exertions the fire was soon suppressed. Insured with British America for \$400; damage, \$41.

SEPT. 2: 1.40 a.m.—A somewhat serious fire was discovered at Pullan & Maltby's pin manufactory, Seignior street. Cause unknown; supposed, incendiarism. The fire itself was confined to the ground floor, in which it originated, and which it most severely damaged, but the contents of the upper floor are more or less injured by smoke and water. An event of this kind is much to be regretted, as the establishment is the only one of the kind in the Dominion, is doing a thriving business, and affords employment to a very considerable number of hands, who, in addition to the loss sustained by the proprietors by the suspension of their business for several weeks, are thus suddenly deprived of the means of earning their bread. The building, which belongs to the estate of the late John Henry Evans (to whose intelligent enterprise it owes its existence), is insured with the Etna of Hartford for \$4,000; loss not ascertained—probably about \$1,000; engine and boiler, \$1,200; other machinery and accessories, \$6,800; stock, \$6,000;—total contents, \$14,000 with British America, who have, however, re-insured \$4,000 each with the Montreal and the Lancashire. The loss on the contents is not yet adjusted, but will, it is supposed, be between \$6,000 and \$7,000.

There have been, in the course of the week, several other minor alarms, but of so trivial a nature that they are not worth recording.

In consequence of the heavy losses lately sustained by insurance companies, by the burning of grain stores, with elevators, a meeting of agents was held here yesterday, to determine the rates to be exacted in future for insuring the contents of the Montreal War-housing Company's store, on Wellington street, when the following rates were agreed upon: viz., On the section next the canal 1½ per cent.; on the section next the street 1 per cent.; in any part of the building, without specification, 1½ per cent, with general average. Will all the contracting parties be true to these engagements? *Nous verrons.*

The clipper-ship Strathbane, outward bound from here, owned by Messrs. Allans, is reported aground below Metis. Two other sea-going ships are also reported ashore at the Pilgrims; tugs have gone down to their aid.

LIFE INSURANCE DIVIDENDS.

The Insurance Times, in a recent issue, remarked that “it is much to be regretted that the idea of dividends, or profits, or bonus, can not be wholly eliminated from the science of Life insurance.” This remark, doubtless, expresses the genuine feelings of large numbers of Life insurance men—a feeling, we think, which is meeting with rapidly growing popularity. It is very far from our purpose to reflect unjustly upon the dividend system. In many respects it possesses marked advantages, and contemplates, not only the rendering to the insured the fullest justice, but it approximates somewhat near to that standard of perfect reciprocity which we can all admire, but with difficulty find, thus representing the principle of equity, as applied to business, in its highest sense. And yet it is doubtful whether the system, as practiced by our Life insurance companies, really serves any purpose of real and permanent good to the policyholder. It is doubtful whether it is possible to so regulate it