

with the woes brought upon him by a fellow-being whom he never wronged. He who stands between such a criminal and swift punishment does injustice to himself, to his family, to his neighbour and to his country.

That many of the fires which occur are the result of deliberate intent, we firmly believe, and to frustrate the designs of such as become criminals with that intent is, we hold, not only the duty of Insurance Companies but the interest of the public. If another man's house adjoins mine I have to pay more for insurance than I would have to do if my house were isolated. The connection of the two renders the risk the greater. If my neighbour sets fire to his house to secure his insurance money he may gain his object, but it will be doubtless by destroying my property. Have I no interest, then, in keeping him honest? The object of punishing crime is to deter others from attempting it. Is it not a duty I owe to myself, therefore, not to take any higher ground, to assist in furthering the ends of justice to the utmost of my power?

The ends of justice are certainly not furthered by pandering to popular prejudice, the offspring of ignorance, or laying blame on a class when one member only may be at fault. Nor are the ends of justice furthered by condemning a company for taking a certain line of defense, the reasons for which are unknown. In this very Beaver case, the real defence was, that plaintiff had set fire to his own premises, after having encumbered both real estate and chattels beyond their value, without notice to the company, and the defendants, if convinced that their grounds of suspicion were good, were perfectly justified in resorting to every means to defeat the claim; not only so but they were, we consider, bound to do so. However, as the counsel for the company has explained he did intend to go fully into the merits of the case were it not that the cause was at the foot of the docket and the presiding Judge, having to adjourn the assizes, could not spare so much time as a full examination of witnesses would have occupied. As the defendants were thus cornered up, they were driven to insist on objections of a technical character which placed the plaintiff out of court.

It will be found in nine cases out of ten in which insurance companies are concerned when technical objections are taken, that there is good and sufficient reason for so doing owing to the injustice of the claim. Often times a company cannot fasten the crime on a claimant although there is not a shadow of a doubt that he wilfully destroyed his premises. In such cases what are the companies to do? Are they to pay the claim and set a premium

on crime, or are they to muster courage enough to resist payment and thereby be heralded before the public as litigious? Even judges do sometimes give utterance to comments on cases in which insurance companies are concerned, which comments are not only uncalled for, but also unjust if all the facts were known. A case came within our own observation in which a Judge soundly berated a company for defending an action, and only stayed his criticism when informed by a learned brother by his side, that the plaintiff had been sent to the Penitentiary by that learned brother's own sentence for the crime of arson. In that case the objections relied upon by the defendants were technical, but their real defence was, that the plaintiff had set fire to the house covered by the policy. The gist of the matter is this. We have no excuse to offer for a company taking an undue advantage under a technicality where there is no *bona fide* defence, or litigating a claim where escape from liability would be unjust. But we do say, that to condemn a class for pursuing the opposite course, or to injure the many for the faults of one, or even a few, is not expedient from a public point of view, nor just from a private one.

If the form of monthly statement returned to the Government were to distinguish between loans effected and maturing in Canada, from those maturing in the United States and England on some such plan as that indicated by Mr. Hogan, of the Bank of Toronto, in his elaborate and able answers to the inquiries of the Senate Committee last session, we should have full information as to the Bank of Montreal's operations in New York.

THE MONTREAL FIRE MARSHALS.

The Montreal City Council has decided to petition the Local Legislature for the abolition of the office of Fire Marshal, and the repeal of the Act creating it. We do not wonder that public indignation has been aroused by the improper use that has been made of the Act in the appointment of incapable officials, and the large increase of incendiary fires since the marshals were installed. No one supposes that these officers are guilty of fire raising though opinion is not so favourable to their deputy but it seems to be generally conceded that a more useless pair could not be secured for love or money than the two men who enjoy the dignity and emoluments of the Fire Marshalship. If the act is defective, and it is acknowledged on all hands, that it is, let it be amended; if the present incumbents are useless or worse let them be removed but to repeal the Act altogether does seem to savor of absurdity.

CANADIAN MONEY IN NEW YORK.

At this season, when the circulation of the banks is at its highest point, it is usual for those institutions to remit to England in anticipation of January balances. This course is the safest, and ordinarily the most profitable, as exchange is lowest in the fall and highest in the winter. The *Toronto Telegraph*, in a telling article, draws attention, on the authority of the *New York Post*, to the startling fact that Canadian Banks are using funds, to the extent of six millions of dollars, in the New York Gold Market. The only Canadian bank likely to engage in such speculations is the Bank of Montreal. Some time ago we traced this practice home to that bank, and pointed out how it was indulged in at a time when the other Canadian banks were contracting their discounts to the minimum by reason of the working of the Provincial Note Act, and when the needs of this country were the greatest. The Bank of Montreal is the financial agent of the Government of Canada, and if the people's money is to be withdrawn from this country and used for speculative purposes in the New York Gold Room, Canada is certainly blessed and may consider itself fortunate in being enabled thus to contribute to the dividends declared by the Bank of Montreal. The bank's charter was intended to cover a legitimate banking business in Canada. Such being the case, these speculations in New York are certainly without its true sphere.

We suppose the bank lends gold to the speculators in the Gold Room, to be repaid within a certain period, United States bonds being received as security, with a power to sell, and a margin allowed for a fall. The rate given by operators for the use of gold varies, of course, with the demand, ranging from one-eighth to even three-quarters per cent. a day. This is rather a heavy rate of interest, and the fact of its being paid proves that this class of customers is not to be desired by a bank wishing to do a legitimate banking business.

PEAT AS FUEL.

There are three primary necessities for human existence—meat, drink and warmth. In a civilized state of society all these have to be produced by human skill and labour. It is true, our flocks, herds and the productions of the field give us the first; nature in its countless springs, streams, and rivers, the second; and the forests, coal deposits and peat beds yield the third; but still the skill of man is required to utilize the abundant resources that nature provides.

In primitive times the forests supplied a sufficiency of fuel for the wants of society