

A Hint to Underwriters.

In connection with the failure of the Montreal firemen, at the recent destruction of two large warehouses, to do more than save adjoining property, we have heard many complaints from representatives of insurance companies. It is very rightly maintained by the underwriters that, although the city can congratulate itself that the large engine, "La France," was saved from destruction by its absence from the scene of the fire, an explanation of the negligence of those responsible for having all the fire-fighting appliances of the city ready for instant use should be demanded.

We referred, last week, to the absolute necessity of some action being taken in the near future to place underground the fearful network of death-dealing wires, which now endanger the lives of our good firemen. We are always ready to point out the lessons to be learned from a serious fire. We are prepared to praise or condemn the conduct of the courageous men who form the brigade entrusted with the protection of life and property from fire. But we venture to remind those who suffered loss at the fire in question, that we ought not to look back, as George Washington is credited with saying, "unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dear-bought experience." If any of the underwriters who have freely criticized the recent work of the metropolitan firemen will furnish us with the substance of what they have noted as faulty or requiring explanation, we will give so important a matter thorough ventilation in *THE CHRONICLE*, not only in the interests of the insurance companies, but for the sake of the firemen themselves, whose reputation for courageous and effective work must not be tarnished by any suspicion of inactivity and want of skill in fire-fighting. That something was apparently wrong on the night of the 20th inst., is quite evident.

Banking as a Profession.

The current number of the *Journal of the Canadian Bankers' Association* contains the prize-winning essay of Mr. C. M. Wrenshall, of the Merchants Bank of Canada. The question "Does Banking in Canada offer as satisfactory a career to a young man as other forms of business or professional life?" has afforded a very talented and thoughtful writer an opportunity to express perfect contentment with his lot, and also to tender excellent advice to those who are confronting that serious problem, the choice of a means of livelihood. Mr. Wrenshall in the course of his clever summary of the chances of success in the career he has chosen to follow says:—

"Banking in Canada offers a good chance of success to an ambitious man who is determined to get on, and has the necessary qualities. Our country is a young one, possessed of boundless resources, which are as yet almost untouched, with room for a population more than ten times what it now has, and a certainty of steady increase at least, and so as yet, is in what one might call her commercial childhood. In

the growth of the country's commerce, and in its development generally, the banks play an important, if not an indispensable, part, by the circulation of money, facilitating the operations of trade, and by furnishing credit to those needing and deserving it. With this growth of the country's trade, the banks are bound to prosper accordingly, and in the prosperity of the bank is the prosperity and the surety of a comfortable future of every employee on its staff."

Without commenting upon the unnecessary importance attached in this excellent essay to the social position occupied by the banker, and without dwelling upon the sound counsel tendered to the aspirant for banking honours, we cannot help following Mr. Wrenshall's lead in quoting from Gilbert's "Treatise on Practical Banking" for an illustration of the qualities necessary to a successful career as a banker:—

"To be a good banker requires some intellectual and some moral qualifications. A banker need not be a man of talent, but he should be a man of wisdom. Talent, in the sense in which the word is ordinarily used, implies a strong development of some one faculty of the mind. Wisdom implies the due proportion of all the faculties. A banker need not be a poet or a philosopher, a man of science or of literature, an orator or a statesman. He need not possess any one remarkable quality by which he is distinguished from the rest of mankind. He will possibly be a better banker without any of these distinctions. It is only necessary that he should possess a large portion of that practical quality which is called common sense. Banking talent (using the word here in the sense of adaptation of character to any particular pursuit) consists more in the union of a number of qualities, not in themselves individually of a striking character, but rare only in their combination in the same person." As the writer of this clever essay sensibly says, Gilbert was himself a very happy illustration of his own words, and no better person could be chosen as a model than that well-known banker.

The *Journal* is indeed, as its Editing Committee claim, a credit to the Association, and we fully understand the pride taken by Mr. Plummer, of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in its production.

Avast there.

Our respect and esteem for the Postmaster-General has already been expressed in *THE CHRONICLE*, and we duly congratulated him upon the success of his efforts to extend the "penny post" to this Canada of ours. But, without admitting any contempt for "our opinions of yesterday," we cannot help quarrelling with the condition of things now prevailing in our mail service. The anomaly of placing a stamp costing three cents on a letter addressed to the neighbouring parish of Notre Dame de Grace, when the transmission of a similar letter to London, G. B., costs "only a penny," requires prompt removal. We even dare to think that the majority of those maintaining much corre-