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SPRING GOODS,
 AND ARE
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FELT AND STRAW HATS
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 64 YONGE STREET,
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THE
Monetary and Commercial Times.

WITH WHICH HAS BEEN INCORPORATED
THE MONTREAL TRADE REVIEW.

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1870.

INSURANCE MANAGEMENT.

There is no post of duty, in the elaborate organization of forces by which mercantile operations are wrought out, that requires more skill and experience than that occupied by the fire underwriter. It is a position to which are attached most weighty responsibilities. A successful insurance manager must be a man of ability, though there need be no approach to genius; brilliancy even is not requisite. A cool judgment, decision of character, and a good knowledge of human nature, are qualities that are constantly called into play. He must be enterprising, without being rash; cautious, but self-reliant and energetic; while keeping his rate-book in view he should not fear to experiment in a direction which general principles and intuitive knowledge seem to indicate as a wise course to follow. To adhere strictly to rates and rules on every occasion, is to play the part of a mere machine; the business of a true underwriter is to say when these guides shall and when they shall not be followed—when the ordinary routine shall be departed from in order to effect a particular object. He should know when to say "Yes" and "No;" and the answer once given, should rarely be departed from. He should be acquainted with the movements of trade, and for this purpose ought to be as diligent a reader of the commercial journals as though he were directly interested in the results which go to constitute success or failure in each branch. This he ought to do with special reference to the "moral hazard" of insurance, which the underwriter should learn to weigh with precision, for on his ability to do this, depends more than on anything else, the success of his company.

Losses, heavy losses, will at times be suf-

fered, and then the underwriter is put on his trial—then it may be seen what stuff he is made of. He is usually treated at the outset to blame, sometimes made the butt of ridicule. Then the croakers who applauded his management in fair weather times, begin to wag their heads and look wise,—“Oh! I foresaw it;” “I knew it would come to this!” Others chuckle with delight because a rival perhaps has met with a blow. All this should be treated with the indifference and contempt it deserves. If an error has been committed, let it be carefully noted and then avoided next time.

In the settlement and disposal of the loss, great judgment is required. Some managers, after satisfying themselves as to the cause of the loss, begin, in their excessive zeal, to look for flaws and loop-holes in the contract, especially if the claim is heavy. The company is plunged into litigation; lawyers and witnesses are feed; costs and expenses are heaped up, and generally with this result—Verdict for the Plaintiff. While the opposite evil of paying unjust claims is always to be avoided; we are satisfied that some managers and companies do themselves great mischief by too much litigation. Judges and juries are inclined to look with disfavor and even suspicion on companies that come very often into court, and are disposed to give the insured the full benefit of all their doubts and misgivings; so that while it seldom pays the company directly, it gradually acquires for it the reputation of being litigious, which in the public estimation means an unwillingness to fulfil its engagements. It is impossible to lay down any general rule which will apply to all cases, but a sound general principle may be stated in these terms:—Where the insured has acted in good faith, believing himself to be protected, and having paid his money to secure the benefits of insurance, he is entitled to such benefits, even though he may have inadvertently violated a condition of his policy, so long as he has not done any act which would have the effect of materially increasing the risk.

There are two or three cases that might be adduced as illustrations. In such cases as the Magill fire at Hamilton, there can be no question that the companies are discharging an imperative duty to themselves and to the public, in unravelling the iniquity in which the first fire had its origin, and to which the second fire may with little doubt be ascribed. They have laid bare a dark plot to shoulder upon the companies by the crime of arson, the results of an unsuccessful business. In the case of the schooner Garry Owen, scuttled and sunk by the captain, as there is little reason to doubt, the Montreal Assurance Company could not do otherwise than resist

payment. Another case is pending in which a large mercantile firm of Toronto appear as plaintiffs; that, on the other hand, it seems to us should, according to principles of equity and fairness, be settled without going to court; the reasons for this opinion we may assign when it is no longer *sub judice*.

In all these matters there is room for the exercise of wise discrimination on the part of the manager in advising his directors as to the course they should adopt. Upon his judgment depends chiefly all the consequences involved.

In the management of agents, too, there is scope for the exercise of all those qualities that go to make a successful insurance manager. While holding them with a firm rein, he should extend every encouragement to exertion. All his communications with them should be characterized by that courtesy which begets friendship and sympathy, and enlists that zealous co-operation on the part of agents which has so much to do with the success of a company. Wherever insurance business is conducted as it is in Canada, the good-will of agents is a matter of the greatest consequence. Agents usually represent several different companies, and to them is generally referred, by the insured, the duty of saying with which particular company any given risk shall be placed. He may, therefore, send all the choice risks to a favorite company, and turn the good, bad, and indifferent into other companies. If a manager is crabbed, pert, fickle, uncivil, unreliable, litigious, fault-finding, dissatisfied, uncommunicative, ambiguous, or in any way disagreeable, the agent soon comes to know of it, and governs himself accordingly.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

A report by a committee of the Senate, relating to our measures, weights and coins, has been printed, and presents some interesting facts. In the matter of weights and measures, we are in little better than a semi-civilized state. When grain and seeds were sold by bulk, there was reason in the disparity of weight between different varieties of grain; but now that everything of the kind is sold by weight, and not by measure, not even a decent excuse can be set up for the maintenance of the present incongruity. As the committee show, there is an entire want of uniformity between the different Provinces, most cumbrous, perplexing, and altogether undesirable. A bushel of Indian corn in Ontario weighs 56 lbs., in Nova Scotia 58 lbs, and in New Brunswick 60 lbs.; barley weighs 48 lbs., 52 lbs., and 50 lbs. in the same Provinces respectively; oats weigh 34 lbs. in Toronto, 32 lbs. in Montreal, and 36