of that statement, and in order that I might more intelligently answer the question in the last paragraph, I thought an introspection of that wonderful mass of statistics might give me something of interest to say.

Is it a fact that fire insurance companies are fond of litigation and are at all anxious to repudiate their liabilities? As a class I think I can most emphatically answer that it is not a fact. To some men it is easier to repudiate debts than to pay them; to some men litigation is pleasant, and the atmosphere of a law court congenial; but that such a man has become the representative of a great insurance corporation, and has practised to his heart's content his particular foibles, should not bring condemnation upon the insurance companies as a body, or upon the managers as a class of men.

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What are the facts? During 1894 the fire insurance companies returned to their insured a little over five millions of dollars. At the close of the year there were cases resisted, and in suit to the amount of $86,454, representing a little more than 1½ per cent. of the losses actually paid. But even here it must be remembered that two large and important cases, involving about twenty companies and not less than $55,000 in amount, are embraced in the sum previously mentioned; and when this is considered, I think everybody will admit that in proportion to the vastness of the business and to the immensity of the liabilities, the amount in dispute does not bear out the oft-repeated accusations against our fire insurance companies.

It is of course impossible for me to ascertain the number of claims our fire insurance companies have to meet in the course of a year, but I suppose I am well within the mark when I estimate the number at 8,000 separate and distinct cases. Nor is it possible for me to ascertain the number of suits taken in the course of a year. I suppose if I estimate fifty suits, involving thirty fires, I am quite within range of accuracy, and now make the comparison of number of suits to number of fires; and will any reasonable mortal dare to call our companies litigious?

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What are the ways of fire insurance companies? Mr. Toronto Lawyer, is it not your experience to speak truthfully that our companies in the main are just and liberal, ever desirous of settling all claims fairly and promptly—nay have you not rather experienced a feverish desire to be over liberal and an all too hasty disposition to discharge their liabilities? May not this be regarded as a cause of the numerous fires rather than the reverse? It is, I fancy, a mistake on the part of the companies to rush helter skelter into the payment of losses, and I fancy the ways of our companies may be said to transgress on this side rather than on the other. Now, Mr. Toronto Lawyer, when next you defend a man accused of arson, be just. and let not your interest in your client run away with your better judgment, and lead you to the declaration of a statement which in calmer moments you cannot justify.

I would like, if I had time and space, to refer to the other side of the case, *i.e.*, to the feelings of the insured in regard to loss settlements; there is much of interest to be said, and in the next issue I shall probably deal with the problem of adjustments and adjusters, telling the truth and shaming "His Majesty."

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by Correspondents

TORONTO LETTER.

Things are not what they seem, nor what they ought to be, just now, as regards the net profit of Toronto Chief Agents.—A new Manager for the L. G. B. A. Co. not named yet.—J. R. McLean, Secy. of the T. B. will call officially—The Russian reply to sympathetic Toronto.

Dear Editor:—

There is a reported shrinkage in the volume of insurance premiums in this city as regards Stock or Board Companies, and which is, I believe consequent on: (1) Diminished stocks carried by merchants. (2) A reduction of amounts formerly insured, partly from reasons of economy, partly from the trust, not misplaced perhaps, many have in the efficiency of the Fire Brigade, not omitting the confidence begotten of long immunity from any serious fires. (3) The competition of the mutuals, now establishing themselves in Toronto as a profitable fiield for business on the "cash plan"—all these causes, with perhaps some minor ones, have without doubt gravely affected the income of many agents whose only or chief income is derived from Fire Insurance. I am of course considering this matter wholly from the agents' standpoint, having heard complaints from several, some especially whose industry and devotion for years to this business merit a fair return for their labor. The monthly accounts rendered to companies may show indeed a handsome sum as a credit for commission paid to any individual chief agent as his share of the revenue; but after all legitimate sub-commissions are paid out to city and special agents, loan companies and so on, the net amount for the said chief agent is greatly reduced. Still, the times being hard, were there no other grievance, no complaint would be made; but as matters are now, the number of persons claiming, and who somehow receive, a share of commission on business they have secured the control of, in one way or another, is larger than ever before. The said hard times have driven many to insurance for temporary revenue purposes. The parties referred to are in no sense insurance agents, though styling themselves such. Some two or three years ago, the Toronto Board endeavored by a judicious system of limitation and licensing, with and without fee, as provided, to check this tendency to promiscuous commission paying. The immediate result was beneficial, certainly, for the idea was both sound and practical, but to-day we find without attempting to say why, that it is generally admitted that the situation is as bad, or perhaps worse, than before the licensing system was introduced. It is for the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters to apply a remedy if they have one, else, better admit defeat and give all a free hand as regards commission paying, not forgetting the insured himself, who even now, it is said, is not infrequently remembered.

I understand that the London Guarantee & Accident Co. have not yet appointed a successor to the late Toronto Manager, Mr. C. D. Richardson.

It is rumored that ere long Secretary McLean will get out his wand of office, with the silver gilt J. P. on it, and go round to administer "The Oath" to each company's representative in Toronto, in connection with a certain matter of alleged irregularity and breach of rule. This backing up one's already given word, with a solemn affidavit, buttressing the truth as, I might say, is rather remarkable, but the order to do it when necessary is in the Constitution and Rules to stay.

Toronto, "Daughter of the Don" as a local poet has it, is blessed with a sympathetic Town Council, tender to a fault (ask Nesbitt, Q.C.) as witness the action of our worthy Mayor and Aldermen in their sole role of cabling across to the Russian Court the expression of this City's participation in the grief and sorrow consequent on the death of Czar