

from the hurricane. The interest was fixed at 4 per cent., no interest being charged until three years had elapsed.

The money was repaid; and if the Imperial Government were now to grant the West Indies a certain reasonable sum, and to lend them a much larger amount on such easy terms as the present impoverished condition of the islands would be deemed to justify, the money would be repaid in time, the cause of a vast amount of suffering and hardship would be removed, and a sentiment of loyalty unusually vigorous in the past would be stimulated.

The Cost of Fire Insurance. In an article under this heading, the *St. John Sun*, a New Brunswick paper which always commands respect for the excellence of much of its editorial matter, says:—

"It appears from this brief analysis that the cost of protection for fire is as low as it can be made in this country unless greater immunity can be secured, or the cost of management reduced. The Canadian who gets his property insured has no reason to complain of the price he pays to the stock holder of the company which carries his risk."

The same issue of *The Sun* contains a report of a somewhat breezy meeting of the Woodstock, N. B. Board of Trade, and it seems more than likely that the proceedings at the meeting in question must have inspired the writer of the article on the Cost of Fire Insurance. The people of Woodstock, a peculiarly unfortunate town (so far as fire is concerned) in past years, are evidently troubled with a belief that they are charged by the insurance agents with the tax levied upon their companies by the Provincial Government of New Brunswick, and, to "even up" matters, the members of Woodstock's board of trade have been expressing their satisfaction in making the insurance companies pay all the taxes possible. The local member of parliament went so far as to execute a wordy war dance upon the bodies of the metaphorically prostrate fire underwriters by affirming that he "believed firmly in taxing the companies, and in taxing them well." As he had previously subscribed to the expressed belief of the owners of insured property in Woodstock that the offending companies charged these taxes to the insured in additional premiums, it is difficult to understand why this wily Woodstockian member of the New Brunswick parliament was not suspected of being an emissary of the underwriters. An insurance agent present at the meeting defended the fire companies he represented by saying that "after taking out commissions, etc., there was not a very large profit," and then, after fanning the flame of discontent by admitting "there was no doubt that some rates are too high," tried to extinguish the blaze created in his customers' minds by adding "on the other hand there are some very bad risks in town." The ambiguity of this amiable agent's refer-

ence to "very bad risks" is not explained in the report; but the member of parliament in closing the debate stated that "his building was charged less before the water-works were put in than now." Altogether, it is not surprising that the Woodstock Board of Trade have requested the Board of Underwriters to discuss this tangled question of taxation and insurance rates.

However, if the incensed people of Woodstock will read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the article on The Cost of Fire Insurance printed in the leading paper of their own province they will hesitate to engage in retaliatory warfare with companies which must occasionally find it difficult to earn the taxes they are called upon to pay. At least, such is the plain truth presented to the people of Carlton County by the *St. John Sun*, when reviewing the business of Canadian fire insurance companies for last year.

The *Sun* says:—The teaching of the latest report of the superintendent of insurance shows that the trade of protecting from loss by fire the people of Canada is not unduly profitable to the companies engaged in the business. If any money is made the agents gather it in.

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If we take last year's Canadian business of the Canadian companies, we find one which paid out \$117 in losses alone for every \$100 received for premiums. Another got less than enough from premiums to pay losses and expenses, while, taken together, they seem to have carried on the Canadian business entirely without profit."

Rifle Ranges and New Uniforms. If the murmuring of Montreal militia men at the failure of their country to provide them with a suitable rifle range constitutes about the only genuine grievance of our citizen soldiers, they may take comfort, if misery really loves company, from the following statement of the very unsatisfactory condition of the volunteer force of Great Britain. The recent rumours of war with some one or more European powers having led to a report that the volunteers whose motto is "Defence not Defiance" were to be mobilized, public attention was immediately drawn to the defenders of British hearths and homes only to find that the complaints of officers regarding official neglect are many, loud and deep, and the discontent of the rank and file so firmly rooted that recruits are difficult to obtain. The *Outlook* says:—

"Our army is so small that we cannot dispense with the services of these citizen soldiers, yet how are they faring? While our population is increasing by leaps and bounds, this force is standing still. There is a dearth of officers and men, and it is largely because the Volunteers, most of them, are dressed in the most unpicturesque of costumes and are shown little consideration by the authorities. During the official year just ended there were, it is true, more new commissions than retirements, but there are many detachments greatly under-officered. From a national