

THE "OLD MASTERS" CASE: JUDGMENT FOR THE FIRE COMPANIES.

The eight fire companies who resisted a claim by Mr. Robillard de Mezuel, of Sherbrooke street, Montreal, for some \$55,000 damage to alleged "old masters" by fire have been justified in their action by the Montreal courts, Mr. Justice Panneton having upheld the companies' contention that the alleged "old masters" are not "old masters" at all. His Lordship, in reviewing at great length the evidence adduced pro and con in the case, pointed out that the testimony of the three experts who attested to the authenticity of the paintings was in no wise positive. They declared that if such and such a picture were by such and such an artist, it would be worth a certain price. On the other hand, the witnesses who were called on behalf of the insurance companies were most positive in their evidence, attacking the authenticity of the paintings. These witnesses were all men of undoubted experience in matters of art, and their testimony had been substantiated by a mass of data showing just where certain paintings known to be originals were located.

His Lordship found that the plaintiff, de Mezuel, had suffered loss to the extent of \$1,433.50, this amount being made up as follows: \$992 cost of restoring and repairing the paintings injured in the fire; \$40 covering the loss of two alleged Gobelins; \$401 damage to the house furniture. The plaintiff had claimed some \$55,000 to cover his loss. The court handed down judgment in the case against one of the insurance companies alone. This company had issued insurance to the extent of \$15,000 on the effects. The court found that its proportionate share in the covering of the loss was \$237.80. Judgment was accordingly handed down for this amount. The disposition of the other cases will be held over to avoid costs, pending a decision in a higher court, if an appeal, as is most likely, be taken thereto.

MONTREAL WATER & POWER COMPANY.

The Montreal Water and Power Co., at the annual meeting of shareholders held on Wednesday, reported for the year ended April 30th last a gross revenue of \$783,689, an increase of \$112,005 or nearly 17 per cent. over gross for the previous year, which was then the best in the history of the company. As operating expenses increased only about \$25,000 and fixed charges about \$10,000, the bulk of the gain in gross revenue was carried on into net profit, which amounted to \$208,812, an increase of \$77,414, or no less than 59 per cent. as compared with the previous year. The company is now amply able to pay a dividend on its preferred stock, as indeed it was a year ago, after conforming with the trust deed provision that a sinking fund of 1 per cent. on the outstanding bonds shall be provided before any dividends can be paid, but a dividend policy is again deferred for reasons altogether apart from the earning position.

On both classes of stock, the company earned over 12 per cent., but in view of the right of the city of Montreal to purchase the property, the question of payment of dividends is deferred.

CANADIAN FIRE RECORD

(Specially compiled by the Chronicle)

MONTREAL.—A. St. Pierre's home, 219 Bourbonniere street gutted and part of furniture destroyed, June 8. Origin, defective stove pipe.

N. Brossard's barn, Wiseman avenue, Outremont, occupied by D. Bissante, destroyed, June 8. Loss \$800.

Picture theatre at 16 Archibald street, Cote St. Paul, property of Mr. Moreau, 107 St. Denis street, destroyed, June 7. Loss \$4,000.

Restaurant at 476 St. Catherine street east, kept by E. Daoust, damaged, June 7. Fire originated in cellar.

Plant of G. & J. E. Grimson, glass manufacturers, 33 St. Antoine Street, damaged, June 8. Origin, overheated chimney of blast furnace.

St. Helene church, St. Maurice street, damaged, and row of sheds adjoining destroyed, June 8.

Premises of John Robertson & Son, 68 McGill street damaged, June 4. Loss \$3,000.

EMERSON, MAN.—Picture theatre owned by L. Carless destroyed, June 7. Loss \$3,000; insurance \$1,500. Origin, lightning.

FORT GEORGE, B.C.—Palace Hotel, South Fort George, destroyed, June 5. Loss \$20,000. Two dead.

STRATHROY, ONT.—Sawmill and stone works owned by James Dogue, of Strathroy, burned, June 3. Loss \$10,000, insured.

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.—Royal Shingle and Lumber Company's plant destroyed, May 27. Loss \$8,000.

MOOSE CREEK, ONT.—Twenty-five buildings destroyed, May 29. Loss \$100,000. Origin unknown. Among the stores destroyed were those owned by the following: S. D. Duinet's departmental store, stock valued at \$25,000; Frank Duinet's hotel, completely destroyed; bakery shop belonging to J. B. Villeneuve, post-office, town hall and furniture shop of A. A. McLean. The private residences destroyed were owned by the following: J. Racine, A. St. Pierre, S. T. Duinet, D. St. Denis, J. B. Villeneuve and barber shop.

POWASSAN, ONT.—Fire which started in cellar of Queen's Hotel, June 7 destroyed this and also following:—Kelly & Anderson's general store; A. Graway's store and residence; D. Cushman's residence, barber shop and pool room, with the office of Dr. Harcourt; R. Barrett's confectionery store; G. Drinkwater's dwelling and livery stable; James Arthur & Co.'s general store and dwelling; F. B. Backler's residence and office; R. Barrett's residence and photograph gallery, and one million feet of lumber, owned by the Trout Creek Lumber Company; two section houses on G. T. R.; A. Mitchell's residence and a quantity of pulp wood and bark. Insurance Loss as follows:

Acadia	\$3,570	North British	\$5,800
British America	1,500	Norwich Union	1,600
Caledonian	1,000	Nova Scotia	5,000
Commercial Union	4,667	Pacific Coast	1,200
Ins. Co. of N.A.	4,200	Queen	1,000
Liverpool-Manitoba ..	5,466	Royal	1,000
London Mutual	1,667	Sun	3,000
London & Lancs	200		
Mercantile	4,000		
		Total	\$48,000