

pared with 1867. On the other side, there is the fact that breadstuffs are very low and pork is very high; that there is a great abundance of cheap food which will be fed out liberally, giving a supply of fat hogs late in the season; that prices rule far above the average, and that therefore the chances are all in favour of a decline. Many of the Cincinnati packers have shown their confidence in the firm ruling of prices for November and December, by contracting for delivery during these months at \$8.50 to \$9 gross.

A feature in the American trade is an increasing demand for bacon from the Southern States. The negroes prefer bacon to pork altogether; in fact, barrelled pork seems to be pretty nearly ruled out of the Southern markets.

The average price of pork in Toronto for five years has been 1864, \$5.61; 1865, \$7.92; 1866, \$5.75; 1867, \$5.36; 1868, \$7.40; the season of 1869 opens at \$8.50 to \$10.00.

THE burning of Messrs. Gooderham & Worts' extensive distillery is a serious commercial loss to the city, as well as to these gentlemen themselves—a loss, however, which their extensive means will enable them shortly to replace.

WE regret to have to announce the suspension of Messrs. John Boyd & Co., wholesale grocers of this city; but are pleased to learn that a compromise is hoped for by which they will resume payments. The business goes on as usual.

—THE "PEOPLES' JOURNAL" is the name of a new weekly publication just issued at Hamilton by Mr. John McLean. It will be devoted chiefly to the manufacturing interests of the Dominion. Mr. McLean is a good writer and in him the Protectionists will find an able champion. The dress and appearance of the Journal are very good.

—THE tenders for several sections of the Intercolonial Railway, have just been awarded:—For section 9, J. B. Bertrand & Co., Quebec, \$554,897, or \$16,899 per mile; for section 12, Summers & Somer, of Moncton, \$597,600, or \$24,378 per mile; for section 8, Donald McDonald, for \$100,000, or at \$4,878 per mile; for section 10, Elliott & Co., of Petrolia, \$308,395, or \$15,419 per mile.

—Messrs. John Ginty & Co. have been awarded a contract on the Nipissing Railway.

Communications.

CAUSES OF THE LATE FAILURES.

TORONTO, Oct. 25, 1869.

Editor of the Monetary Times.

Will you allow me to point out, through your columns, the causes which have ruined the Albert Life Assurance Company, and placed the European in such difficulties, and which have caused so much alarm and distrust amongst those who have made, or contemplate making, this legitimate provision for a family; a provision made without risk, and at very small present pecuniary sacrifice, provided it is undertaken with a proper degree of caution, such as persons use who are embarking in business or any other important

transaction in life. The Albert did not fail from having accepted more than usually bad lives, or from want of support. It did fail from its unwarrantable expenditure of its premiums, in expenses, and in the purchasing of other companies (twenty-two in number), every one of which was too weak to stand alone, and of which many were floated into existence for the mere purpose of being sold, and putting money into the pockets of their promoters. For these amalgamations the Albert paid £500,000, and the manager received, as his commission on the premiums, £15,000 a year. The difficulties of the European have arisen from much the same cause. Although I am not aware that their manager derived any pecuniary advantage from the absorption of about 30 other companies, common sense ought to have shown them that it was folly to join those who were too weak to stand on their own legs. Its condition has also been aggravated by its uniting the business of a guarantee society to that of a life office.

Now, what is the lesson to be learned from these failures. It is not distrust of life insurance as an investment. It is to carefully weigh every circumstance connected with the companies; and if you contemplate life insurance, not to wait to be asked before making inquiries, but quietly to gather information, that when the time comes you may have no misgivings as to the prudence of the course you contemplate. Why should insurers take for granted every statement made to them as to life insurance, when they would not adopt such a course in opening an account with a merchant desirous of buying upon credit? Why will they not make due enquiry as to the origin, capital and standing of a company soliciting a risk, and insist upon having a full statement of its affairs before taking out a policy. If they will not do so, and in consequence enter a company with which they become dissatisfied, and drop their policies, and find fault with all companies without any just cause, they have only themselves to blame.

But I am digressing. Looking at the companies doing business in Canada, I think there are very few which furnish in their circulars such information as will enable you to form an opinion. They point out, in flourishing terms, the advantages they hold out over others, but withhold the only really valuable data to go upon—the financial statements and actuarial valuations of assets and liabilities, and the proportion the expenses bear to income. Every person interested in the subject must be aware that during the earlier years of a company the premiums will largely exceed the claims, and that in consequence great temptation exists to spend an undue proportion of its means in forcing a business, instead of making provision for the future.

In a report sent to all the policyholders, the actuary of the Commercial Union Assurance Company, Mr. Patterson, points out the cause of such failures, and the course recommended and adopted by his company to avoid it. He says, in substance: "If the nature of life insurance be considered, it will be found that it is almost the only business which, when conducted upon right principles, is perfectly free from risk. Yet it is doubtful whether any other description of business has been carried on with so small a percentage of success; and I showed that this want of success has not been occasioned by the prevalence of a high rate of mortality among the assured, in consequence of the acceptance of bad lives, but that it had almost entirely been due to the squandering of the premiums in excessive expenditure. To prevent the possibility of failure from this source in the life branch of the Commercial Union, it was resolved that the whole of the life funds should accumulate as special trust, and should not be liable for the transactions of the other branches of the company, and that the expenditure during the early years of the business should be guaranteed not to exceed 10 per cent. per annum on the premiums received. These resolu-

tions of the board being confirmed by two extraordinary meetings of the shareholders, were incorporated with the deed of settlement of the company."

Yours truly,

W. M. WESTMACOTT.

DOMINION TELEGRAPH.

To the Editor of the Monetary Times.

SIR:—I see, by the daily papers, that the somewhat notorious Mr. Reeve has been got rid of, and that the directors are about to make a new appeal for the amount of calls in arrears. Probably the arrangement with Mr. Reeve was the best that could be made; but I think it very hard that the shareholders should be forced to pay \$20,000 more for the line already built, and that to the schemer who has got us all into trouble. You would oblige one, at least, of your readers in this town, by advising me, in any manner you may think proper, as to the best course to adopt under the circumstances. I enclose my address.

Yours, &c.,

A SUBSCRIBER.

St. Catharines, Oct. 25th, 1869.

Real Estate.

SALE BY AUCTION IN TORONTO.—Messrs F. W. Coate & Co. sold by public auction at their rooms on the 23rd inst., the following properties:—A newly finished rough cast house on lot 40 by 120 feet Car Howel street, to Mr. Muttibury for \$1,090; lot No. 4 on Orde street, 50 feet by 165 deep to Mr. Holland for \$410; a lot on the west side of St. Patrick street, 36 feet front by a depth of about 100 feet to Mr. J. Mulvey for \$290; part of lots 3 and 4 on the south side of High Street, 50 feet by 120 and a rough cast building situated thereon, and consisting of four tenements to Mr. Perkard for \$820; lot 90 on Lippincott Street, 25 by 100 feet to Mr. Humphreys for \$100; lot 91 on the same street and of the same measurement to Mr. Hawkins for \$110; a corner lot on the west side of Strachan Avenue 52 feet by 143 to Mr. W. Hughes for \$260; lot 23 on the same side of the same street, and of the same size to Mr. Thompson for \$220; lot 24 on the east side of that street 52 by 120 feet, also to Mr. Thompson for \$260; lots 1 and 2 on the north side of Clifford street each 50 by 112½ feet deep to Mr. Farr for \$120 each; lot 16 on the east side of Stafford Street 50 by 120 feet and lot 18 on the same street and of the same size to Mrs. Sinnott for \$160 each; a lot on the south side of Robinson Street 135 feet by 132, together with a small house thereon to Mr. Paterson, for \$905; a house on the west side of Strachan Avenue 50 by 120 feet to Mr. W. Hughes for \$210.

SALES IN COBourg.—The property known as "Scott's block," fronting on Division and King streets, was sold to P. McCallum for \$10,675. The very handsome residence and grounds of Mrs. Scott, on King street west, was sold to Bernard Lilly for \$1,975.

SALE AT ST. CATHARINES.—The Clement property sold for \$1,550.

SALE IN QUEBEC.—A number of prominent merchants are about to establish a ribbon factory, and purchased a property from Mr. Withall, in Paul street, for \$20,000.

The Bellevue cottage was sold last week, with lot 50 feet front, for \$3,000—on time.

Commercial.

Oil Matters at Petrolia.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

PETROLIA, Oct. 25.

Oil matters are very brisk this week, and several sales have been made at good figures. I may quote 10,000 barrels (fresh pumped) to the Carbon Oil company at \$1.75 per bbl. Some small lots of tanked oil have also changed hands at \$2 per