

THE CANADIAN MONETARY TIMES

AND INSURANCE CHRONICLE.

DEVOTED TO FINANCE, COMMERCE, INSURANCE, BANKS, RAILWAYS, REAL ESTATE, MINES, INVESTMENT,
PUBLIC COMPANIES, AND JOINT STOCK ENTERPRISE.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1870.

SUBSCRIPTION \$2 A YEAR.

Mercantile.

J. B. Boustead.

PROVISION and Commission Merchant. Hops bought and sold on Commission. 82 Front St., Toronto.

Buntin, Brother & Co.,

WHOLESALE STATIONERS, and Paper, Envelope, and Bank Book Manufacturers, Nos. 3 and 4 Commercial Buildings, Yonge Street, south of King Street, Toronto.

Wm. Croft & Co.,

MANUFACTURERS of Needles, Fish Hooks, Tackle, &c., Importers of Cutlery, Thimbles, Pears and Buttons, Hooks and Eyes, Pins, Combs, and Small Wares in general. 37 Colborne Street, Toronto, Ont.

Childs & Hamilton.

MANUFACTURERS and Wholesale Dealers in Boots and Shoes, No. 7 Wellington Street East, Toronto, Ontario. 28

L. Coffee & Co.

PRODUCE and Commission Merchants, No. 2 Manning's Block, Front St., Toronto, Ont. Advances made on consignments of Produce.

John Fiskin & Co.

ROCK OIL and Commission Merchants, Wellington Street East, Toronto, Ont.

Gundry and Langley.

ARCHITECTS AND CIVIL ENGINEERS, Building Surveyors and Valuers, Office corner of King and Jordan streets, Toronto.
THOMAS GUNDRY. HENRY LANGLEY.

Lyman & McNab.

WHOLESALE Hardware Merchants, Toronto, Ontario.

W. D. Matthews & Co.

PRODUCE Commission Merchants, Old Corn Exchange, 16 Front St. East, Toronto Ont.

R. C. Hamilton & Co.

PRODUCE Commission Merchants, 119 Lower Water St., Halifax, Nova Scotia.

H. Nerlich & Co.,

IMPORTERS of French, German, English and American Fancy Goods, Cigars, and Leaf Tobaccos, No. 2 Adelaide street, West, Toronto. 15

Parson Bros.,

PETROLEUM Refiners, and Wholesale dealers in Lamps, Chimneys, etc. Waterrooms 51 Front St. Refinery cor. River and Don Sts., Toronto.

Reford & Dillon.

IMPORTERS of Groceries, Wellington Street, Toronto, Ontario.

W. Rowland & Co.,

PRODUCE BROKERS and General Commission Merchants. Advances made on Consignments. Corner Church and Front Streets, Toronto.

Sessions, Turner & Cooper.

MANUFACTURERS, Importers and Wholesale Dealer in Boots and Shoes, Leather Findings, etc., 8 Welton St. West, Toronto, Ont.

Sparrow & Whatmough,

IMPORTERS and Dealers in General House Furnishing Goods, Willow, Wooden and Hollow Ware, Chandeliers, Kerosene Lamp Goods, Oils, &c. Manufacturer of Water Filters, Refrigerators, Meat Safes, Children's Cabs, etc.
[87 Yonge Street Toronto.]

Insurance.

INSURANCE MATTERS IN NEW YORK.

(From our own Correspondent.)

NEW YORK, Jan. 12, 1870.

The year just closed has been one of more than average good luck for our fire offices, and is expected to equal 1868 in satisfactory results. There were quite a number of large fires during the year, but also several long intervals during which the losses were slight. No thanks to the city of New York, however. It furnished 913 fires, against 822 in 1868, being an increase of 10 per cent. Total number of buildings damaged and destroyed, 1,010, besides six large vessels. But, after all, the estimated loss, though large—\$3,416,302—is 15 per cent. less than in 1868; when it was \$4,057,376. Amount of insurance on buildings, \$2,599,789, and on stores, \$7,323,883, making a total of \$9,923,672. Of the total fires, 456, or one-half the total number, show a loss of less than \$100 each, and 814, or 90 per cent. of the whole number, show a loss of less than \$500 each. The arrests and convictions for arson are becoming more frequent, owing to the superior vigilance of the present Fire Marshal, Chas. N. Brackett. More than one-tenth of all the fires in New York and Brooklyn were caused by kerosine. There has been legislation enough in regard to this dangerous explosive, but it is not heeded.

The fire business has generally been conducted during 1869 with fairness, and a uniform and sensible adhesion to rates established by the Rating Committee of the National Board. The influence of the Board, especially in the able investigations and reports of the Executive Committee, has been manifest, and has done much to keep the companies within the practice of sound underwriting.

Life companies continue to increase in number, notwithstanding the general conviction that there are already too many of them. Those that have more recently been brought into the field, have been "set up" for purely speculative purposes—to enable the officers and directors to get, besides interest on their capital, a percentage of the premiums. That many of these young offices will be compelled to retire, after a brief existence, is a financial certainty. There is not sufficient new business for them. Their number is in a ratio entirely out of proportion to the number of the insuring classes. Besides, a dozen old companies continue to do seventy-five per cent. of the entire business. This fact shows that in the matter of life insurance, security is regarded by the public as more important than the cheapness of competition.

Various plans for preventing this reckless multiplication of companies have been suggested. One is to insist upon a much larger deposit at the Insurance Department. But this would fail to reach the root of the evil. The capitalists who can draw their semi-annual interest on United States or State bonds at Albany, just as in New York or Washington, would as cheerfully deposit \$500,000 as \$100,000. But if the general Act of 1853 was so worded as to require a company to

have a given amount of insurance effected and the premiums deposited before they could obtain a charter, then the metal of the organizers would be tested; then the public, too, could take the measure of their capacity, and determine whether their services were needed. Now, any thirteen persons, no matter what their character or capacity, can put up \$100,000 at Albany, file any sort of by-laws, and forthwith declare themselves a life insurance company. And as the more modern "promoters" are usually men of inexperience and little influence, they proceed to waste all the premiums they can get, by whatever sharp practices and delusive promises, in high salaries to themselves and high commissions to agents, thus demoralizing the business, and bringing it into disrepute among the general public, who ought to have annually increasing reasons for respecting it.

The general "flat" condition of business affairs during the past year has had its effect upon the life business, and the rates of insurance for 1869, over 1868, will doubtless be considerable less than in the two previous years. But it has been less inflated than in previous years, and there will be fewer losses and surrenders on the amount done.

The year witnessed the retirement of Commissioner John E. Sanford, from the Massachusetts Department, and Hon. Wm. Barnes, Superintendent of N. Y. Department, has already issued his card announcing his new role insurance lawyer, and consulting actuary, at Albany. It is understood that by the death of a relative, Mr. Sanford inherited a large estate, the management of which compelled him to resign. The two annual reports which he submitted to the legislature were distinguished for sound sense, and a courageous denunciation of such conservative views as were deemed necessary, in the interest of sound insurance.

The retiring of Mr. Barnes will prove a great loss to the 104 fire and 34 New York life companies. When the law of 1859 created an Insurance Department for this State, insurance affairs were in a state of confusion. The law of 1849 called for annual statements of such companies only as were organized under it. It was the general act of 1853 that first compelled all State companies to report. These returns were without uniformity, often imperfect and deceptive, and there was a general absence of organization and regularity in the management of insurance capital. To reconstruct all these offices, devise suitable forms of annual returns, to deal skilfully and firmly with the complicated affairs of the several life offices, generally so unwilling to show their hand, especially to place \$30,000,000 of fire insurance capital upon a thoroughly sound basis, and compel the companies representing it to adhere to the principles of sound underwriting, yet to maintain, so far as possible, friendly relations with them, was the laborious task assigned to Mr. Barnes. That he has done it with conspicuous ability, is proved by his report of 1869, which contains very specific returns from all the companies, and in a series of the most complete statistical tables shows how systematic and reliable the business is now being done in all its branches. There is quite a flutter just now among the insurance press. Several companies—especially