

Justice Beekman, of New York, signed an order a few days ago discontinuing a very important suit in which the American Surety Company was involved. The suit was instituted by Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, against the Standard Asphalt Company. Her Majesty sued several years ago to recover a large quantity of asphalt taken from the Island of Trinidad. The American Surety Company went on Her Majesty's bond in the replevin proceedings that followed, undertaking to pay the costs in the double event that the Queen should lose the suit and fail to satisfy the judgment that might be entered against her. Both Queen Victoria and the asphalt company have agreed upon a settlement and the American Surety Company is no longer responsible for Her Majesty's solvency.

An Antarctic expedition, from which important and interesting information is certain to result, has been arranged for next winter. It will be partly a trading and partly a scientific enterprise, and will be under the command of Captain Svend Foyn, of Christiania. Mr. W. S. Bruce, an energetic young Scotchman, of the Ben Nevis Observatory, will have charge of the scientific party, composed of himself and four other men. The scientific party will be landed on the Antarctic Continent, in Victoria Land, in January next, and the vessel will then engage in whale and seal fishing, returning to Australia. The following season, in January, 1898, she will return and take off the scientific party, who hope by then to be full of knowledge of the fauna, flora, geology and topography of the Antarctic region. Magnetism, of course, will receive full attention and, if found practicable, an attempt will be made to reach the south magnetic pole. Mr. Bruce and Capt. Foyn are not without hope that the expedition will be a commercial success, holding that blue whales are plentiful in the Antarctic, and the only reason why they have never been caught is that no ship has been south which has carried the right tackle.

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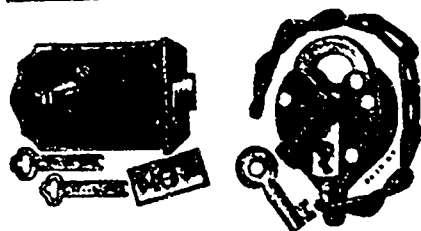
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The Michigan product of lumber last year was 2,731,029,535 feet; shingles 360,535,500. There has been a more or less steady decline since 1888, when the maximum output of lumber, 4,292,189,014 feet, was reached. Still Michigan held its own among the Northwestern States, the total product of all the mills in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa being 7,093,398,598 feet of lumber and 2,465,368,600 shingles. This is not a great decline from the maximum, 8,934,053,173 feet, reached in 1892. The figures show that the two Western States are slowly gaining over Michigan.

Tallow products are still in the state of oversupply they have been since last year came so low as to drive compound largely out of consumption and thence free tallow products that went into the latter, while the dullness in butterine has had the same result in oleo oils. Edible tallow has not been used to any extent for its usual purposes this year, but for soap making. With this excess of supplies that had to go into tallow there has not been any increase in home consumption to offset it, and over 6,000 hogheads of tallow and greases have gone into export through one export house alone since the first of the year from this and Western markets, of which about one-quarter to one-third has been city product and almost as much as all last year's entire exports of the latter at least. Chicago is steady at 4c for

choice; at which two lots of about 500 cwt. each were sold there lately to the local candle makers. Europe at the moment is out of line except France, which is taking small lots still. But as a rule the bulk of choice goods have gone to the United Kingdom, and the lower grades largely to the Continent.

At the session of the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association (Canadian), in Toronto last week there was taken up a discussion of the report presented by the committee to consider the registration of fires. Their first recommendation was that the registration statutes of Ontario should be so amended as to provide for registration of fire losses in the same way as births, marriages and deaths. Second—that a statement under oath should be given of the value of the property consumed, the total amount of the insurance and the company in which the said property was insured. The committee also express the opinion that the locality of the fire and its origin, as far as could be ascertained, should be given. The third recommendation requires the Municipal Clerk to make yearly returns to the Bureau of Statistic for Ontario, and that they be published. The Ontario Government will be asked to make an inquiry into the system of fire marshal's investigation, now in operation in the State of Massachusetts, and, if found profitable, it will be introduced in that province.

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