

TORONTO LETTER.

To the Editor INSURANCE SOCIETY.

DEAR SIR,—June may be well called the Flower and Queen month of the year (no covert allusion to Agent Graham intended), but it is by no means the Queen month of the Insurance year. I find complaints made generally as to Fire business being slow at this time. Those fortunate ones who have Marine Agencies in addition to Fire find things booming at present to their satisfaction. In grain there is a tendency to hold and store, necessitating renewal of Insurance Policies. I suppose the holding is for better prices, influenced no doubt by the possibility of short crops, in view of the cold late spring we have had.

A number of fires occurring in the same night in the city, this month, have clearly been incendiary; the prompt attentions of the fire brigade subdued them all, fortunately, before they had a chance to spread. From the insurances effected on some of these premises and my knowledge as a passer-by of the risks in question, I have come to the conclusion that the very hardest kind of property, both as to occupancy, general appearance and state of repair, need never want for insurance in our best Companies, so long as a commission is obtainable for the introducing of them. It is a case of Cr. Commission Dr. the Insurance Companies. Our Real Estate friends are, as they say, doing well with properties in and around Toronto, but Winnipeg speculations and Manitoba Land booms are not heard of this summer, nor likely to be.

Life Insurance Companies report a larger average of new business than for the corresponding period of last year. For comfort and certainty of annual income and remuneration, commend me to a well-established Life Agency. True, Life risks are more difficult to get, but once on the books of a good Company the "consideration" derived from them by an Agent is less liable to fluctuation and diminution than that from any other branch coming under the general term of *Insurance*, whether it be Fire, Marine or Accident, for these latter suffer from the pressure of dull times in the Commercial world very quickly.

I have written so far, on or as near to common sense as I can get, that a little nonsense must follow now. An amusing incident I am told occurred at a late Board meeting here. Brother Blank, who for sometime has been enjoying the advantages of a good head of hair with luxurious whiskers, &c., in view of the approaching hot weather decided to "leave off his furs," i.e., get his hair cut, which he did, and did so extensively as to alter his appearance most completely—and this regardless of the advice contained in the refrain of our Grand Tariff Hymn "Cut brothers cut, but cut with care." On his attendance at the first ensuing Board meeting, X sitting at the end of the table, and who is very nearsighted, asked S. (who is a sad wag) who the stranger was at the opposite corner, alluding to Blank Friend. S. took in the situation at once, and replied "he is Mr. —, of the new Hamilton Board, deputed to confer with us as to Rules and Regulations for his Tariff Association. Whereupon up jumps the impulsive X., and hastens round to Blank, warmly grasping his hand and congratulating him upon the formation of the Hamilton Tariff Association, &c., &c. Imagine the surprise of Blank and of the others present on finding business interrupted by these strange proceedings and the uncontrollable merriment of S.

After explanations ensued there was more fun, joined in by Blank who, as usual, was good-natured throughout the mischief. Really, after seeing Blank myself I readily understood how altered in appearance he was, and that, aided and abetted by the wicked S., poor X. could easily make the mistake he did.

When business in the Board-room is slack, we "improve the shining hour" of meeting, by revising the wording of certain policies. Lately there was brought up the form of policy of a large City Printing and Publishing House. The wording of this was considered to be too much in the "blanket" line, but as the insured proved obstinate in holding to his "form," it was decided to charge two rates, to pay which would be optional with insured—say for insured's wording—and for the Companies—the latter being the lower rate. The Company having the first policy falling due for renewal, I am told proceeded on this understanding, with the result that they lost the risk, which was taken by another Company, member of this Association, at the old rate, with objectionable wording. This was annoying, of course, and considerable dust has been elevated in consequence, and which has not yet sufficiently

settled to enable me to see the end of the matter. We have another objectionable wording still to come before us, but somehow those interested and on the risk do not seem anxious to tussle with it, but it must come ere long. Some of the brethren are weak and need sea air before taking up so momentous a question.

Mr. Charles D. Hanson passed through this week on his way to Hamilton to rate the risks there for the new Tariff Association. Properly enough, he called on our Association to get information on certain points, rates, &c., which the experience of our Board is well calculated to afford. I approve of the selection of Mr. Hanson, as he is not connected with any Insurance Company and presumably unbiassed. This is as it should be. Further, I do think that, if a necessary but distasteful duty has to be done (and it will be distasteful to the Hamilton merchants to have their low rates advanced) one ought to select to do it a skilled, but genial and pleasant gentleman, and so avoid as much as possible arousing any animosity, or sore feeling on the part of the interested insuring public.

I look upon the selection, by the Insurance Companies of Mr. Hanson as an apt illustration of the well-known words:—

"Heaven tempers the wind to the Shorn Lamb." For this occasion only, I suggest:—

"Heaven" The Insurance Companies.

"Temper—the—wind" Mr. Chs. Hanson (not his first appearance on these Boards).

"The Shorn Lamb" Hamilton Insurers.

A Circular, under date of 9th June, has been issued by Mr. McLean, Secretary of the Provisional Committee, calling a meeting of Insurance Companies, doing business in Ontario, for the 26th June, to consider and adopt a Minimum Tariff of rates for all places in this Province "where no tariff or agreement as to rates now exists." As all stock Companies I am informed have given their written consent to join a "Minimum Tariff" it may be considered as an accomplished fact. Mr. McLean is to be congratulated on his perseverance in urging this Tariff on the Companies from year to year, and in having at last attained his object. When I next write I hope to be in a position to say when Tariff goes into operation.

Yours, &c.,

ARIEL.

Toronto, 13th June, 1883.

To the Editor INSURANCE SOCIETY.

I have followed the series of articles entitled "Apportionment of Insurances in Fire Losses," which have appeared in recent numbers of SOCIETY, with much interest. They all "smack" more or less of *Griswold* it is true, but that doesn't make them any the less interesting to your readers I'm sure. I am glad in the May number to see "the unsolved" come to the front once more, because it seems to me that in the sixteen or twenty-six (which was it?) times this problem has been solved by as many different "experts," in as many different ways, with as many different results, none of them have done the square thing in the premises according to the conditions "nominated in the bond." Now I am not an "expert" but one of the "tyros" so feelingly alluded to by your valued journal in the concluding paragraph of Part III, and if it wouldn't be considered cheeky, and you will give me the room, I would like to ask a few questions, which will come in very pat during that period of leisure ensuing between now and the future occasion upon which you propose to "explain the fallacy of some of the solutions offered by experts of the "unsolved problem."

I want to know, to commence with, what is the meaning of the "contribution clause," supposed in this particular case to be common to all of the three Companies' policies, and given to us as follows: "in case of other insurance it ("it" meaning "this Company") shall be liable to pay only in proportion as the amount of its ("this Company") insurance shall bear to the whole amount of insurance upon the property at risk."? If the English language expresses any meaning there it, to my mind, means a contract with the insured that the Company cannot be called upon to pay any greater portion of the loss upon the subject or subjects covered by its policy than the amount at risk thereon under such policy bears to the aggregate amount of insurance thereon under all policies. If this is the case, and it is,