

of these articles now reaching the annual aggregate of seven millions of dollars. The figures for the two Provinces named are:—

Fiscal Years.	Feet.	Value.
1870-'71	702,499,000	\$7,051,391
1869-'70	717,775,000	7,071,238
1868-'69	554,767,000	5,662,762
1867-'68	570,749,000	5,663,126
1864-'65	330,950,000	3,325,478

South America is our next largest customer for plank and boards after the United States; but even the shipments thither are chiefly on American account though loading at Montreal.

The relative quantities shipped to the various countries who buy these articles from Ontario and Quebec are shown by the percentages following:—

Countries.	Fiscal Year 1870-'71. Per cent.	Fiscal year 1869-'70. Per cent.
To United States.....	95.386	96.044
" Great Britain	0.381	0.281
" British N. America..	0.058	0.077
" British West Indies	0.028
" South America	3.993	3.474
" France
" Germany	0.154	0.124
" Other F. Countries..

Our exports of timber are nearly three times the aggregate value of the sawn lumber sent abroad. Adding together the value of timber and lumber we have as the total value of the products of our forests in 1870-'71 no less a sum than \$22,352,211, about one-third of our entire exports. For four years past the value of these exports has increased at the rate of a million dollars annually. It is apparent therefore that we are rapidly realizing upon the valuable forests with which Canada abounds, and to this fact our present singular prosperity may in a large measure be attributed.

BRITISH AMERICA ASSURANCE COMPANY.

During the year ended 30th June the fire and marine premiums were as large a sum as \$333,753, against \$248,731 in the year 1870-'71, which was up to that time the heaviest annual receipt in the history of the Company. That only so moderate an amount as \$26,082 was saved after losses and expenses were paid proves that a large premium line does not necessarily mean large profits. The percentage of losses both in fire and marine as between 71 and 72 per cent, showing that the year has indeed been one of great anxiety, and that not only to the management of the British America, but of every insurance company that has to earn dividends out of Canadian business. And when we look at the character of the year, the members of this Company are to be congratulated on the fact that not only have all claims been paid

with promptitude and the usual dividends declared, but that the position of the finances has been strengthened by the addition of \$12,000 to the reserved fund, making, with previous accumulations, \$92,000 over and above the Company's capital of \$200,000, and all current liabilities.

Like sensible men the Governor and Directors, after three year's trial, have revoked their connection with a combination which has yielded a continual succession of losses, for the past season at least. We mean the ocean marine business transacted by the Canada Insurance Union. If the results in the marine department last year were unsatisfactory, that must be attributed to this branch of their operations, the inland marine being entirely successful.

We fully expect for several reasons that the current year will show a marked improvement on the statement now presented. If it does not we know the fault will not be chargeable to a want of care and caution on the part of Mr. Ridout, who is one of the most conscientious and painstaking officers within the limits of our acquaintance.

STOCK SPECULATIONS.

The noticeable flatness of stocks, and the steadiness of quotations from week to week as compared with the violent fluctuations they undergo in the active season, serve to demonstrate the fact that a pretty large and important speculative element has been created in the leading money markets of the two upper Provinces. It is well known that the notion is rather widespread that there is money to be made by operating in stocks, and in Montreal especially the pernicious precedents of Wall Street have, we have reason to fear, been too often followed. Putting up margins and carrying stocks with the proceeds of call loans is a class of transactions which must be large in the aggregate if the whole truth were known. This is neither a desirable nor a safe business, and as the busy season is about to commence a word of caution may not be ill-timed. It creates a false idea of wealth and therefore leads to extravagance: so far as merchants and manufacturers engage in it, to the same extent precisely is the solidity of the commercial fabric endangered. These outside operations are sure to beget entanglements, frequently heavy losses are suffered; and in a period of stringency these call loans are sure to be wanted just at the moment when they can least be spared. It is hinted that a number of business men have been beguiled into this gilded snare; we hope the number is limited and that even the foolish few who have ventured may be advised in time.

HOME DISTRICT MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY.

The Home District is a landmark in mutual fire insurance; it has not drifted with the tide which has carried most companies of this class away from their moorings. Mr. Rains sticks faithfully by his text, and that text is the Mutual Principle both in theory and practice. The hybrid system which has supplanted mutual insurance in the case of most of these companies is not based on any principle recognized as sound, but is an outgrowth of expediency; for some years past the effect of adherence to the mutual basis has been to sacrifice business. While several companies doing a mixed business have grown to enviable proportions—and some of them are thoroughly sound and well-managed corporations—we should much prefer to see them conducted either as stock or mutuals, not for fear of evil consequences in these cases, but because the principle involved is one to which we must adhere; it is impossible for us to concede the wisdom or safety as a principle of conducting stock insurance on a mutual basis. Legislation on this subject being promised for the next session of the Ontario legislature, the whole question must come up for discussion then. Perhaps it should be added that while we are clear as to the principle involved, we should condemn any unnecessary disturbance of vested interests, any violent uprooting of existing arrangements matured under the sanction of the statutes now in force as most unwise and uncalled for.

PROSPECTS OF COBBOURG.—This town, though at one time a most flourishing place, has been little else than the shadow of its former greatness for ten or twelve years past. The local railway, from which immense results were expected, proved an engineering as well as a financial failure, and was suffered to fall into ruin and decay. Great benefits that were expected to follow the building of the Grand Trunk proved utterly delusive; instead of advancing the prosperity of the town, that road cut off the trade upon which it depended, and left its fine and expensively built harbor without tolls or shipping. Now, however, a most gratifying change has come about; and the chances are that Cobourg will soon be herself again. At a meeting held there on Monday week, it was resolved to extend such aid to the present owners of the Cobourg and Peterboro' Railway as will enable these enterprising gentlemen to rebuild the Rice Lake Bridge, a work that will cost close upon \$200,000, and extend the line to Bobcaygeon and