

republic, and it is no secret that the Irish emigrants have for many years given the preference to the United States. But, if we are not greatly mistaken, the Eastern States contribute very largely to the population which has flowed into those in the West; and although Canada welcomes settlers from every country it is not likely to receive so many as the States to the south of the line. A very interesting portion of the paper in *Harper* is the description of our Pacific Province, which has been hitherto much under-estimated: "From the Rocky Mountains to Fort Moody, almost the entire distance is through a labyrinth of densely-timbered mountains, worthless as yet, because inaccessible, but destined to grow in value as our Eastern pine becomes exhausted. Of the natural wealth of the North-west coast it is hard to speak in measured terms, for in climate, in fertile soil, in fruit, in timber, in coal, in fisheries of the finest salmon, it seems as if the best gifts of nature had been poured out with unstinted hand." It is admitted, that of the three sister States, Oregon, Washington Territory, and British Columbia, closely resembling each other, the greatest riches of coal and iron, so far as known, lie within the British possessions. The writer finds it hard to predict the future of the Pacific railway. It is by no means certain in his opinion that it will be profitable to operate. The amount of through traffic on the Union Pacific is surprisingly small, and contributes little to the dividends which have been paid. In length and in grades the Canadian route will compare favorably with any further south, and it may be expected that there will be a remunerative lumber trade, so that, on the whole, it may be hoped that there may be some dividends for the stockholders, owing to the grants of money, land, and finished road. This is a widely different view from that taken by the opponents of the Company in Canada, who lose no opportunity of exaggerating the enormous profit on the construction, and the extravagant rates charged for transport. The rates, if we are not mistaken, have been sanctioned by the Government, and we presume that they are fair and reasonable, although doubtless higher than those on competing lines. The contribution to *Harper* is calculated to encourage the hopes that have been formed as to the future of our new territories in the North-west and in British Columbia; and we sincerely hope that our countrymen who have embarked their capital in the Canada Pacific Railway may be amply rewarded for their enterprising spirit.

FIRE INSURANCE, 1881.

In advance of the full report of the detailed statements of the Fire Insurance Companies for the year 1881, the Superintendent of Insurance has sent us the summaries, with some details and tables exhibiting the progress of the business and the condition of the companies. 1881 appears to have been the most disastrous year experienced by the companies since the system of making reports was inaugurated, 1870 and 1877 alone excepted; the Quebec conflagration was not alone the cause, as its loss was only \$800,736, but the number and extent of losses upon what are generally deemed desirable classes of business was very large, and the unusually hot and dry summer helped to increase the loss ratio. The general impression is that 1882 has, so far, been equally unfortunate, and that, unless the companies unite in the adoption of a proper system of rating, they may not reasonably expect more favorable experience.

The premiums for 1881 amounted to \$3,827,116, being an increase over those of 1880 of \$347,539. The losses incurred amounted to \$3,212,381, exceeding those of 1880 by \$1,687,545, being nearly double the ratio. The net amount insured by policies in force in Canada at the end of 1881 was \$462,210,968, an increase of over fifty millions over 1880. This increase in the amount at risk has arisen from the erection and operation of manufacturing establishments, the accumulation of stocks of goods, and the unpopularity of mutual insurance companies; the latter causes appear to have over-balanced the former, so that the average rate of premium paid is slightly reduced, but, at the same time, the principal additions to the manufacturing hazards have been of classes whose rate of premium is very slightly above the average, and there has been an unwarranted decrease of rates of premiums all along the line.

One true index to the business is again omitted from these reports, viz., a comparison of *earned* premiums with losses and expenses incurred; these premiums could be found by deducting from the sum of premiums in force at the beginning of year, and of premiums received during the year the unearned premiums at the end of the year. Such a table would show the actual experience of the companies during the year, and we need not do more than repeat the truism that receipts are not necessarily earnings, to show the desirability of such a table.

A comparison of the losses with the average amount at risk shows the former

to be at the rate of 73½ cents per \$100, so that, when we reflect that a very large proportion of the losses were upon non-hazardous risks, we perceive the necessity for a general revision of rates.

We believe that a better system of adjustments is being inaugurated; this, combined with more rigid inspection and reformation of risks *before they burn*, may produce a more favorable record, especially if combined therewith there be more conservative practice in reference to amounts carried in any one locality or on any one risk. We are glad to know that associations of fire underwriters are being formed at various points for the general improvement of the business, and that Montreal is to "point to heaven and lead the way" by setting an example of harmonious equitable action, such as will bring reasonable assurance of profit to the companies, with protection to the assured, and will abolish the brokers.

It is interesting to note the differing views of the Dominion superintendent and the Ontario inspector of insurance on the Parsons judgment.

CANADA ON THE WAR-PATH.

It would most assuredly be a graceful act on the part of Canada to offer to assist the Mother Country with two or three regiments for service in Egypt at the present crisis, although it is far from improbable that before their embarkation the rebel leader would be completely deserted by his followers. Any proposition of the kind, moreover, would be denounced not only by the regular opposition, but by "Young Canada," or, as its partisans prefer to style themselves, "Canada First." Whatever may be the objections, and they are, it may be admitted, very strong, to such a proposition, it would not be so absurd as the offers from a Nova Scotia colonel and from Ontario volunteers to take part in the Egyptian campaign. We of course do not imagine for a moment that the colonel who proposes to raise a regiment, or the militia officers who express their readiness to volunteer, contemplate rendering their services without pay; and yet they must be aware that there is no difficulty whatever in obtaining any number of officers that may be required for the service, and we have not heard that there has been found a serious difficulty in obtaining men on the present terms of enlistment. What must at once strike those who take the trouble of reflecting on the subject, is that certain Canadian gentlemen, who are desirous of entering the military service of the Crown have made public their willingness to