

The Insurance & Finance Chronicle.

VOL. XVII.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1, 1897.

No. 3

THE Insurance and Finance Chronicle

Published on the 1st and 15th of each month.

AT 1734 NOTRE DAME ST., MONTREAL.

R. WILSON SMITH, Proprietor.

Annual Subscription (in Advance) - - - \$2.00
Prices for Advertisements on application.

All Communications intended for THE CHRONICLE must be in hand not later than the 10th and 25th of the month to secure insertion.

Our Annual Tables

We have much pleasure in drawing attention to the tabulated returns of the Fire and Life Insurance Companies for 1896, which appear in this issue. We have to thank the Managers for enabling us to publish these statistics exclusively so early. Our thanks are also due to a United States correspondent for a table which is also published in advance.

Insurance Agents Association.

We recently discharged a duty to the insurance interests by condemning the inflammatory and discreditable language used in a circular issued on behalf of an organization of so-called insurance agents. Between all the officers of a company, the company as an organization, and the policy-holders, there exists a mutuality of interest to which each party contributes, and from which advantages are derived by each. As a baulking, or kicking, or sulking horse in a team hinders progress, so anyone associated with a business enterprise, like an insurance company, who is openly opposing, or covertly working in antagonism to the company, or treating its affairs with indifference, is an obstructor to its advancement. The circular we condemned was, we are glad to say, not issued by the National Association of Local Fire Insurance Agents, which has been "organized for the purpose of encouraging better practice in the forms and principles of underwriting, and the promotion of mutual protection and social intercourse among its members." These objects are commendable. Mr. Durfee, the Insurance Superintendent of Illinois, regards the Association as one which "will undoubtedly help to bring about a higher tone in fire insurance business,

decrease moral hazard, help to remedy the carelessness of the insured, and assist in driving 'wild cats' back to their lairs." It is certainly desirable to put some check upon the reckless methods some agents adopt in seeking business. The disregard they show as to both physical and moral hazard, and the detraction they indulge in to damage other companies are injurious to the insurance business generally. By an organization of agents these evils might be restrained to some extent, as by the discussions at their meetings more intelligent ideas would come to be held in regard to underwriting than those which agents must entertain whose practices are objectionable and injurious. An agents' association working in harmony with the companies may do efficient and invaluable service in raising the tone of the business the members of it are engaged in, and decreasing the losses which fall upon the companies by the reckless competition, and neglect of underwriting principles, which their agents are tempted to display when working in isolation.

Sherbrooke Water Supply.

THREE civil engineers of high reputation: Messrs. Lea Walbank, Lesage and Bail-
larté, have severally reported that the water supply mains in the City of Sherbrooke are wholly inadequate to furnish good fire protection, the pressure also being defective. The supply of water is in the hands of a private company, which very naturally and properly regards the enterprise as one to furnish dividends on the capital engaged. Such companies have been of the greatest service, they have provided a regular supply of water to populations when the local authorities had declined, or neglected to do so. But all expert opinion is now in favor of the requisite works for the supply of this prime necessity to every household being administered with the utmost economy, solely in the interest of the rate payers. Water is not a manufactured article, like all illuminants, nor has it any competitor. Its scantiness of supply is a direct menace to public health, as well as a serious danger to property in case of fire. The Sherbrooke Water Work Company is not open to the