INSURANCE MATTERS.

Mr. Spencer Thomson, manager and actuary of the Standard Life Company of Edinburgh, accompanied by Sir Ralph Anstruther and Mr. J. H. Davidson, who are directors of the company, visited Toronto this week. They are about to cross the continent to British Columbia before returning home to Scotland.

There is a very definite and increasing hazard attending electric lighting. According to the Chronicle Fire Tables the percentage of loss from this cause, which was 2.63 per cent. in 1898, rose to 3.02 per cent. in 1899 of the total recorded property losses. It was exceeded only by two other sources—defective flues, which were chargeable with 7.28 per cent., and spontaneous combustion, which was credited with 4.13 per cent. It is to be remarked that defective flues and spontaneous combustion are causes of fire which are likely to occur in most risks of all kinds, while the number exposed to the electric hazard is comparatively small. If electric lighting were universal, the companies would be deluged with fires from this source.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Board of Fire Underwriters began at Hamilton on Wednesday last. E. A. Lilly, of Montreal, is president, and A. W. Hadrill, of Montreal, and W. Robins, of Toronto, were joint secretaries. The following members were present: P. M. Wickham, Lansing Lewis, J. G. Bothwick, J. McGregor, J. R. Kearley, J. E. Dickson, G. F. C. Smith, H. Thompson, Thos. Davidson, R. W. Tyre, W. Mackay, of Montreal; James Boomer, P. H. Sims, T. A. McCallum, J. J. Kenny, G. Wright, George J. Pyke, H. M. Blackburn, of Toronto, and F. Haight, of Waterloo. On Wednesday morning reports from the various committees were discussed. Later the Hamilton Board of Trade sent a deputation to welcome the Underwriters to the city. One proceeding that will be welcomed was the resolution to reduce rates on mercantile risks in New Ontario, west and north of the Georgian Bay. It was also decided to correspond with the authorities of Quebec, and to arouse them and the citizens to improve the waterworks system of that city, where the next meeting of the board is likely to be held. The officers elected on Thursday are: H. M. Blackburn, president; Alfred Wright, of Toronto, vice-president for Ontario; J. McGregor, of Montreal, vice-president for Quebec.

FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

The peanut crop in the south will not amount to much this year, on account of the drought during the summer.

Dealers in Malaga fruit are averse to making quotations, so unsettled are the markets and so great an advance is indicated

Olives are likely to range small in size this year, owing to the drought, but will probably be expensive in spite of a fair crop.

The new crop of filberts is reported to be a large one, though it is expected to be late in maturing. Prices have a tendency upwards.

Shipments of Canadian cheese to Britain from Montreal last week were 99,937 boxes, as compared with 62,605 boxes for same period last year.

The Market Record, Minneapolis, makes American spring wheat receipts August 1 to September 15, 25,620,000 bushels this year, against 17,310,700 last year; winter wheat from July 1 to September 15, 28,298,000, against 19,055,000 last year.

Mail advices from the Puget Sound to-day state that the demand seems to be increasing for Cohoes, especially half pounds. This description is held by some operators at from 85c. to 87½c. Sockeye salmon, the advices state, is almost entirely cleaned up on the Sound.—N. Y. Bulletin.

It was reported in New York on Wednesday that a cable quoted higher prices on new crop Grenoble walnuts. Sales aggregating some 2,500 bales were noted in this market late Monday at a price equivalent to 10¼c. to 10¾c. laid down here. The higher prices noted are due to the higher opening values on California walnuts.

The coffee market of New York was unsettled on Wednesday for Brazil grades, but with a firm undertone and considerable local sales. Advices from Europe showed an easier feeling, both in Havre and Hamburg. West India coffees were dull on Tuesday with prices fairly steady. East India growths also steady with fair movement.

Manitoba oatmeal millers are asking the Government for a readjustment of tariff for that article. At present the duty on oats is 10c. per bushel, and on oatmeal 20 per cent., and the millers claim that it is almost impossible to keep their mills running, as the oat crop is too short to fill the demand, and the duty on imported oats is so high.

According to the estimate of Toronto fruit men, 200,000 barrels of summer and fall apples have already been allowed to go to waste in Ontario this year, owing to the over-production and fall in prices. Many other products, also in the fruit and vegetable line, have suffered similar neglect. Peaches have been selling as low as 15c. per basket, and tomatoes 10 and 12c. per bushel. The remedy would appear to be to ship only the higher qualities and to be more careful in grading.

An experiment which is being watched with considerable interest, is the trial shipment of a car-load of fruit from Grimsby, Ont., to Manchester. The fruit was brought to Montreal in a special car, equipped by the Grand Trunk Railway with automatic refrigeration, and was loaded in a series of special compartments arranged between decks of the steamer. The fruit is not really frozen, but instead, is kept at a temperature between 45 and 50 degrees, the constant circulation of pure air carrying off the gases, odors and moisture which the fruits throw off when confined in packages. The Ontario Government, we believe, is bearing the expense of equipping the steamer.

IN THE DRY GOODS STORE.

South of Scotland despatches state that the tweed industry is still slack, and many looms are idle.

What with war in China and famine in India, the consumption of cotton goods in those countries has been much below the average.

In the Burnley weaving district in England cotton mills representing over 2,000 looms stopped work early this week, and the prospects look gloomy.

Advices from Lyons state that the raw silk market is quiet. There seems to be no reason for this prolonged indifference on the part of buyers, except that the fabric markets are slow, and as manufacturers receive no encouragement in the form of advance orders or stock transactions, they do not feel inclined to buy much raw material.

The Central Agency in Glasgow, comprising the firms of the Coats, the Clark Company and the Brooks Company, on Tuesday last advanced prices 3d. per pound on knitting, mending and tambouring cottons. The increase equals 12½ to 15½ per cent. The second quality, soft and glace reels, was also advanced at the rate of a shilling per gross of 500-yard reels.

A letter from the Dry Goods Economist correspondent in Paterson, N.J., notes the general feeling that conditions will improve at once after the election of McKinley, whose success is regarded here as assured. Another cause for confidence is the expected demand for velvet. Several mills are preparing to change their machinery to make velvets, those operating broad looms as well as ribbon manufacturers.

Dealers say that women are buying only the thinnest silk and lisle hose and that even when cold weather comes the heavier hose will go begging. Extravagant foot dressing has become a mania. One house is showing an exclusive line of black gauze silk hose, with a weblike tracing of gold thread above the slipper, and caught in the gold meshes on the instep a small inserted butterfly of point lace.

It is believed by Manchester authorities that the average time of stoppage of the cotton mills there will be about two months, though it is possible that it may be considerably longer. This, including the wages of some 500,000 hands, means a loss of about £25,000,000. This lamentable fact is due to a failure of nature to supply sufficient raw material within the