

PERJURY IN INSURANCE CASES.

Last week we published an extract from the report of the New York Board of Fire Underwriters, which furnished some statistics of a startling character. Thirty-two per cent. of losses are the result of design on the part of the insured or the direct act of the incendiary! Seven millions nine hundred and nine thousand dollars were paid for losses caused in the city of New York during the last 13½ years, by the incendiary! The returns from the Insurance Companies lately laid before the Dominion Parliament indicate losses at 53 1-5th per cent. of the premiums. How much of the losses were the result of design we are unable to say, but it may be assumed that the per centage in Canada fully equals that of New York; in fact some place it much higher. However that may be, there is not the slightest doubt that our Insurance Companies suffer greatly from the crime of incendiarism. We have noticed by the law reports that some of our judges lean strongly against Insurance Companies in the allowance of several pleas, by way of defence, to actions on policies. Of course some Companies may abuse their privileges, and bring discredit on their fellows, but there is no reason why all should suffer for the misconduct of one, or that a criminal should gain advantage by being aided in his attempt to secure the price of his crime. If arson and incendiarism are to be put down, the only way of doing it is by an union between the honest portion of the community and the Insurance Companies. Juries must be taught to feel that prejudice against Companies in favor of claimants is the shield in only too many cases of the criminal. Insurance Companies must combine to track out the incendiary, and by joint action secure his conviction. The law must be so amended as to narrow the circle within which the criminal can move with impunity.

A move is being made in the direction last indicated, and it is likely we shall have a provision in our criminal law which will enable a company to prosecute for perjury where a proper case can be made out.

Case after case has come up in which there is no doubt that premises have been fired intentionally, but evidence sufficient to convict cannot be brought forward; whereas facts may be shown sufficient to sustain an indictment for perjury in respect of the declarations of loss. The Act now before the Senate respecting offences has been amended in Committee so as to embrace the following excellent provision:—

Any affirmation, affidavit, or declaration required by any Fire, Life, or Marine Insurance Company, authorised by law to do business in Canada, in regard to any loss of

property or life insured or assured therein, may be taken before any Commissioner authorised by any of her Majesty's Superior Courts to take affidavits, any Justice of the Peace, or before any Notary Public, for any Province in the Dominion, and any such officer as is hereby required to take such affirmation, affidavit or declaration. Any person knowingly, wilfully and corruptly making any affirmation, affidavit or declaration required by any Fire, Life, or Marine Insurance Company authorised by law to do business in Canada, claiming to be entitled to any Insurance money in respect of any loss of property or life insured or assured therein, or on behalf of any person making such claim containing any false statement of fact, matter, or thing, in regard to such loss of property, or life, shall be guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury, and shall be liable to be imprisoned in the Penitentiary for any term not exceeding fourteen years, and not less than two years, or to be imprisoned in any other gaol or place of confinement for any term less than two years, and to pay such fine as the Court may award.

Insurance Companies will see the propriety of framing the conditions on their policies so as to utilize this enactment.

IMITATING THE CURRENCY.

An objectionable practice obtains to some extent among patent medicine dealers and others, of getting up an imitation of a bank bill, and circulating it as an advertising dodge. We are not aware of any cases of swindling in this connection here; but in the American cities, there are numerous instances in which the ignorant and unwary have been entrapped into taking these imitations for money. For instance, a party of soldiers purchased fifty dollars worth of wine with a "Mustang Liniment" note; a New Mexican sold a horse for forty dollars, receiving the "greenback" of a commercial house in payment, and did not discover his error till too late.

We contend that this is not a legitimate way of advertising, and ought to be discouraged.

GALWAY MINING COMPANY.—We understand that this company is pushing on vigorously with three relays of men at work night and day. A specimen of galena, of great purity, has been sent to the office of this journal for exhibition, and we shall have great pleasure in submitting it to the inspection of those interested. Plans of new buildings, smelting works, &c., are being prepared as the great success thus far achieved has given heart to the enterprise. A quantity of ore was sold to American buyers at the mouth of the shaft, at satisfactory prices; besides that a ready market can be had at Montreal for all the ore that can be raised. We hope to be able to send one of our correspondents to the scene of operations ere long, as the development of that mining region is a matter of importance to the country at large.

ONTARIO PEAT COMPANY.—Some changes have been made in the arrangements of this Company, and we are assured that the undertaking will be

prosecuted vigorously. Nearly \$20,000 of the stock has been subscribed, \$44,000 has been taken in part payment of the land, and \$36,000 will now be placed on the market, and a canvass for subscriptions made. It is intended to commence operations very soon; we shall watch the progress of the enterprise with much interest.

Insurance Agents in the cities, towns and villages, of the Dominion, would oblige us by furnishing, at our expense, the particulars of fires, in their respective localities, either by mail or telegraph. It is difficult to get strictly reliable information of this kind, so that agents and adjusters would confer upon us a favor—which we would be happy to recognize in a substantial way—and also do their own and other companies an important service, by complying with this request.

—The steamer *Grecian* struck on Split Rock, in the Cedar Rapids, St. Lawrence River, on Tuesday; it is feared she will prove a total loss. A telegram says "her bottom is out." Valued at \$50,000, insured for \$40,000, in the British America for \$5,000, also in the Home, the *Etna* of Hartford, and Security for amounts which we have not ascertained.

The Insurance Companies' Returns have been laid before Parliament; the totals are as follows:—

	Premiums.	Losses.
Fire.....	2,000,000	1,065,000
Life.....	1,000,000	258,000
Marine.....	200,000	82,000

Communications.

LIFE INSURANCE.

Editor of the Canadian Monetary Times.

Life insurance, as one of the easiest and most legitimate modes of providing for a family or old age, is now happily receiving the attention of the thoughtful and prudent. To meet this demand, offices are every day springing into existence: many holding out inducements which the most moderate study of the subject must convince any one who reflects upon it, that they cannot carry out. Unfortunately, the great majority of insurers take it for granted that all companies are equally good, relying upon the agents' statements. Now, entering into such a compact, which, in the great majority of instances, continues through life, is as important a step as entering into business; and any one, in this case, would require carefully to consider the advantages or disadvantages of it before committing himself to such an undertaking. I shall therefore, with your permission, briefly call the attention of your readers to the principles which I think should govern the choice of a company. One of the most important is the conditions contained in the policy as to its restrictions and privileges. Most of the English companies doing business in Canada are based upon the same conditions, the difference being that, in one or two, claims are paid in one month after death, instead of three, and that all policyholders derive equal advantages from the time of entrance, instead of the older policyholders taking the larger share of the bonuses. The American companies' policies, as a rule, contain conditions which place the insured entirely at the mercy of the company, besides this most important consideration, that in case of trouble between England and the United States, their policies would be valueless, as it is not to be supposed