

ocean freight, there is now a decided advantage in the New York route over that by the St. Lawrence; and trade will always seek the cheapest channels. Patriotic motives will not influence men to send grain to one port when they can make more out of it by sending it to another. The profits of the business are lean enough at the best, and every additional cent of price is welcomed as a boon by the merchant whose purchase of grain so often show a profit on the wrong side of the book; it may therefore be a question, not of adding to profits, but of reducing a loss to the smallest minimum.

Be this as it may, the grain is going to New York, and those who are shipping it, say that it will bring back a much better return than they could obtain for it in any other way.

This is not a pleasant prospect for the produce merchant of Montreal or for the Allan Steamers. They have been endeavoring to obtain higher freights, but this will render that out of the question; it is a question, indeed, if the freight by that line has not been too high for years back.

Of all those engaged in the transport of the vast masses of grain from Chicago and Milwaukee to Europe, no one has made any profit, speaking broadly, but the owners of the Montreal Steamers; the merchants who have carried on the trade are, mostly worse off than they were five years ago; they have worked hard, and displayed fully as much judgment as is usual in other lines of business, the only fault perhaps has been a tendency, on the part of some, to speculate beyond their means. But after years of labor their profits have almost invariably been swept away by force of circumstances, and returns from Europe have left them in debt. When results show a steady average loss in a particular trade there must be a fault somewhere. And the question is, whether the ocean freights have not been on so high a scale that the merchant could not live. The profit on grain between one point and another is, of course, a question of cost of transport. Montreal stands, we may say, midway between the Western States and England. She pays the Western producer so much: she receives from the English consumer so much. But at the end of five years trade, and handling some sixty million bushels of grain, she finds she has not even made a commission. A bare one per cent. would have left Montreal merchants a profit of six hundred thousand dollars. It is a question if the net results do not show a loss of as much. Evidently the cost of transport has been too much. Either on the lakes or canals, or on the ocean, grain has been too heavily taxed on its passage.

The feeling in Montreal in view of past losses and this diversion of business, is anything but cheerful. And something will need to be done to remedy this unfortunate position. The parties mainly interested are the proprietors of the Allan line of steamers. And none are better able than they, to devise measures for meeting the altered circumstances. They have very large means, vast experience, and well-trying business capacity. They knew the course of trade as well as any men in the country, and they are so deeply interested not only in the steamers, but in the prosperity of Montreal and of Canada, that we are sure they may be relied on to do whatever can be done to retain the large trade which has flowed through the St. Lawrence route during the last few years.

**CITIZENS INSURANCE COMPANY.**—It is encouraging to notice the progress this Company is making in the direction of placing itself in harmony with recognized principles of insurance. On a previous occasion we noted the fact that a deposit with the Finance Minister of \$53,000 in municipal debentures had been made; now we observe that a further sum of \$50,000 in cash has been deposited—making \$103,000 in all. A license has of course been issued. A copy of the circular mailed by the Company to its agents last month has reached us, which states that “the Directors have decided to amend their charter, so as to legally separate the Life Fund from the other funds of the Company.” This is a necessary and important step. In the same circular it is stated the subscribed capital stock is to be increased to \$2,000,000 with ten per cent. paid up, giving the Company a cash capital of \$200,000. We are glad that the management of the Company have after mature reflection, become convinced of the wisdom and necessity of these various changes, and to see, with us, that it was only in this way that they could hope to win public approval and success.

—A convention of United States bank officers is to be held next July at Saratoga. It is expected that from one thousand to twelve hundred members will be present. They disclaim the idea of “dictating reforms, or of changing any laws, or of making innovations on existing rules for the government of banks or their business.” What they intend is to do good to each other “by meeting together, making each other's acquaintance, and talking over matters of concern to all bank officers, and to make their official duties more easy in the future, and to leave a ‘green spot’ in the pathway of the past that it will be a pleasure to look upon.”

—Four companies have withdrawn from the United States National Board of Fire Underwriters, in consequence of which some of the New York journals have been predicting the break-up of the Board. As there are about one hundred and seventy companies yet remaining, that occurrence is by no means probable.

—The Royal Mutual Life Insurance Company of Ottawa has been provisionally organized with Hon. James Skead as President, and E. Griffin and Joseph Annand Vice-Presidents; A. Graham, Secretary. It is proposed to raise a capital stock as soon as the requisite subscriptions can be obtained.

—A round amount of stock has been subscribed in Montreal and other cities, towards the formation of the Merchants Marine Insurance Company of Canada, and a meeting of shareholders to elect directors, etc., has been called for the 12th instant, in Montreal.

—The annual meeting of the stockholders in the Quebec Exchange was held on the 28th ult. Messrs. Weston Hunt, Henry Fry, T. H. Grant, A. Thomson, W. Walker, A. Wood, D. Rattray, were elected Directors for 1875.

—The Canadian Mutual Fire Insurance Company, of Hamilton, have established an agency in Toronto. Mr. H. P. Andrew, who has had some years experience in the business in Canada and in the United States, takes charge of the Toronto office.

—220 vessels are owned in Prince Edward Island, representing 34,088 tons.

## Correspondence.

### PROTECTIVE UNION AND COLLECTION BUREAU.

TORONTO, May 6th, 1875.

To the Editor of the *Monetary Times*.

SIR,—Having read the communication in your issue of 30th ult., signed “Retailer,” dated at Hamilton; also your article in reply thereto, we beg to correct some false impressions they might convey, if allowed to go unchallenged.

In the first place, we are not the “Yankee adventurers” referred to by your correspondent, and have not yet established an agency at Hamilton—though we soon hope to; and however true your statements may be with regard to some of the Collection Agencies heretofore in operation at the above place, and in this city, they are totally at variance with the facts as applied to our Bureau and its operations. This can be easily ascertained by communicating with the merchants of nearly every city and town in the Western Peninsula of Ontario, in some of which we have been in operation since September last. One of the best proofs that our Bureau system is giving general satisfaction, is the fact that the greater number of the monthly statements from those Solicitors where we have been longest in operation, contain fresh