

diminish in number and extent, as we should naturally suppose they would do. The fire losses during the months of January, March, July, August and September, were almost unparalleled. The *Insurance Chronicle* tabulates the fire losses of the first ten months of 1883, in the United States and Canada, as follows:

	Fires.	Loss.	Ins. Loss
January....	1,231	\$9,773,866	\$5,581,128
February ..	889	7,402,228	4,264,786
March .....	1,121	8,072,018	4,823,217
April .....	956	7,350,342	4,033,671
May .....	1,131	9,107,400	4,497,140
June .....	847	5,991,235	3,346,005
July .....	1,197	8,182,823	3,346,005
August ....	1,226	10,305,607	5,211,440
September...	1,367	8,662,926	4,496,173
October ....	1,159	8,910,462	4,585,785
Total ....	11,124	\$83,758,907	\$44,934,343

If the above figures represent the real amount of loss, which is nearly double the amount of insurance, the losses cannot be attributed, as many of them often are, to over insurance. When the losses of the whole year are before us, we shall have something to say as to the lessons they teach.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR COUNTRY MERCHANTS.

Have you taken stock?

If not, get at it when the holiday trade is over, and the back of the winter's trade is broken. Don't take in any spring goods until your stock-taking is done.

Have you made out your accounts?

If you have, take advantage of the sleighing to drive round and collect them. Should you be a candidate for municipal honors, you can thus see your friends and kill two birds with one stone. If the book accounts are not yet made out, make a beginning at the work, at least, at once.

Have you insured your premises or stock?

If not, think of the *Fire Record* you have seen in this journal from week to week, and ask yourself how long it may be before a fire overtakes you, and sweeps away your savings. Your resolution to insure will prove not the least of your good resolves for THE NEW YEAR.

#### MANUFACTURERS' NOTES.

The stock-holders of the Coaticook Knitting Co., met some days ago at the Company's new offices when the following Board of directors was elected:—Messrs. John Thornton, G. O. Doak, A. A. Adams, Benj. Austin, and J. S. Budden. The Board organized by electing Mr. Doak, president, and A. A. Adams, Esq., vice-president.

A grist mill and tub factory is to be erected at Milby, Que., in place of the one burned two years ago. Work is expected to commence in the spring.

The cotton industry in the United States does not seem to be in any more satisfactory condition than in Canada. The *Baltimore Sun* says that careful enquiry made among the cotton mill owners of Maryland elicited a uniform statement that there is an over-production of goods, an over-stocked market, and that the trade of the year has been unsatisfactory.

The Belgian iron manufacturers have addressed a petition to the Minister of Public Works urging him again to make a trial of iron sleepers on the Belgian State Railways. They point out that the Belgian iron industry is at present in a

very critical condition. The principal manufacturers lack orders for their productions, and are puzzled to keep their works going and their workmen employed. They argue that experiments in Germany have proved the value of iron sleepers, and that Government and private contracts for 20,000 to 30,000 tons of such sleepers are there being given out.

Within the last few months, and after a series of careful experiments, there has been discovered in Melbourne a process of treating cast iron, which bids fair in the future to play a very important part in the iron trade. The ordinary way of producing castings in iron is somewhat tedious. In the first place the pattern maker designs in wood an exact model of the object required; then the moulder takes an impression of this pattern in sand, specially prepared for the purpose, into which the molten metal is run. Left undisturbed until it is cool enough to bear handling, the casting is then taken from the mould, which, being broken up by the removal cannot be used again. The process of "casting in a chill" is also attended with many disadvantages, particularly that of rendering all castings so hard as to be unworkable. The new method is very simple, it has been patented by Jenkins & Law, of Melbourne. The *Melbourne Argus* says:—The castings to be operated on are cast in the chill, allowed to cool, reheated in a furnace to a particular temperature, and then plunged into a liquid containing certain ingredients. Thus treated, the iron develops a close, tough, but comparatively soft grain, so much like that of average steel, that experienced ironfounders in the colony had great difficulty in believing the metal to be cast iron at all. The change wrought in the iron is physical, not chemical. Its molecules are apparently affected, in their way of arranging themselves, by the sudden shock caused by precipitating the heated metal into cold water.

—The Pembroke manager of the Quebec Bank writes us on 27th December:—"Business promised well hereabout last spring for lumbermen, but sales were few and considerable disappointment in prices was experienced; and the outlook at present is not encouraging—the local trade fair but less than previous year; payments met easily; wages high with outlook for next summer fair." Writing from St. Anne de Bellevue, Que., on the subject of the timber trade, Messrs. J. & B. Grier tell us "that our dimension timber business has been very satisfactory, demand being good and prices about the same as last year's. The Lachine timber market has been fairly active, prices all around equal to last year's. Our Upper Ottawa timber arrived in Quebec somewhat late, and we concluded that it would be better to hold till next season than to sell at prices offered last fall."

—The Halifax City Council is at present agitated over a proposed new departure with respect to the fire department of that city, which does not meet with the approval of the insurance agents. Last week, a motion was adopted by a vote of eight to seven, providing for a new paid fire department to cost \$15,000. This is instead of the present volunteer one, and the figure named is about \$6,000 in excess of the estimated cost of the present brigade for the ensuing year. The number of the firemen is to be about one-third of the volunteers now forming the department. Reconsideration of the matter is to be had at the next meeting of the Council. An Act to legalize the change will have to be passed by the Local Legislature before the present department goes out and the new one enters upon duty.

—The *St. John Daily Telegraph* notes a gratifying increase in the number of new wood vessels built last year in New Brunswick, 60 vessels aggregating 21,114 tons having been added during the year as against 53 vessels of 14,079 tons in 1882 and 43 vessels of 13,229 tons in 1881. Of the 38 vessels written off the registry, 26, with a total tonnage of 7,757, were wrecked; 3 were re-entered; and 9 with a tonnage of 4,786, were transferred to other ports. This makes a total loss to the port of 35 vessels whose total tonnage was 12,543 tons, and leaves a total gain to the port of 25 vessels, aggregating 8,571 tons. This makes the tonnage of the port for the year, as compared with previous years, as follows:—

1870.....	214,814
1875.....	270,762
1880.....	275,879
1883.....	253,689

—Referring to a letter which appeared on page 709 of last issue, we have the following, under date 31st December 1883, from Messrs Squire & Boughner, private bankers, Bothwell. "In relation to the question, 'How have you found business,' would say that the report from our firm in your issue of Dec. 28th, was written by a clerk in our office and is not a correct statement of affairs in this part of the country.—True, there is a scarcity of money at present; but payments have been remarkably well met. It will take more than one bad harvest to seriously affect the farmers and business men in Bothwell county, who with very few exceptions are sound financially."

—A correspondent at Loughboro, (Sydenham Post Office) in the heart of the Rideau Phosphate country, tells us something of the way in which the trade of that district is affected by the market for apatite: "Business has been up to the average during the past year. No doubt it would have been over the average but for the serious decline in the price of phosphate at Kingston. Unfortunately for the phosphate miners, there is only one buyer in Kingston of that article. There is very little doing this winter in the way of phosphate mining with us, and there will not be much got out unless the price is very much better."

—Present complaints of depression in the Clyde shipbuilding trade are not altogether surprising in view of the rapid expansion recently experienced. The statistics of the tonnage launched each year show:—

1879 .....	174,750 Tons.
1880 .....	241,114 "
1881 .....	341,022 "
1882 .....	391,934 "
1883 .....	419,664 "

The heaviest output of vessels in any previous year occurred in 1874, which chronicled a tonnage launched of 262,430. The growth of this trade is marvellous, if we contrast the tonnage of the year 1859, viz., 35,709 and 1860, viz., 47,833, with the figures now recorded.

—From Victoria, B.C., the manager of the Bank of British Columbia writes under date 19th December, 1883: "With reference to your enquiry, business in this province appears to have been very satisfactory during the past year (barring one or two considerable failures), and the prospect is encouraging for the progress of settlement and steady trade next year."

The International Railway Company will apply for an amendment to its charter, permitting it to extend its line to Sherbrooke. At present its trains run between Lennoxville and Sherbrooke over the Grand Trunk.