

A Double Agency Case.

In the Liverpool Court a case was recently decided of interest to many insurance agents. A Mr. Moss, of that city, was secretary of a Master Builders' Association. He was appointed a special agent of the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation. He was to receive 10 per cent. on all insurances whether new or renewals originally introduced through his agency, if the total did not amount to £400 a year, but 15 per cent. if that sum or over it. He was also agent for other insurance companies, to the knowledge of the Ocean Accident, as well as secretary of the Builders' Association. Some difficulty arose out of his duties in these positions conflicting with the interests of the Ocean Accident, whereupon his agency was cancelled. He then brought suit to recover commission on premiums of such insurances as he had introduced when in the company's employment. After the case had proceeded some time, the foreman and the jury said, "We have heard enough of the case, we give a verdict for defendants." The judge said, "You are quite right; it is impossible for a man to serve two masters—to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. There is really no case."

Latest Electrical Advances.

The first weeks of the 20th century will be memorable in the history of electrical science by two achievements. Signor Marconi has succeeded in sending messages without wires a distance of over 200 miles. Of course, this marvellous experiment was conducted by himself in person, aided by highly accomplished scientific experts at both stations, which were placed in communication in the south of England. Of course, too, the atmospheric conditions were most favourable, as well as those of a topographical nature. Still, while recognizing these circumstances as exceptionally helpful, the achievement must be regarded as foreshadowing the adoption of wireless telegraphy for practical use to some extent. Mr. Marconi is not likely to be devoting his life to a scientific toy. Another marvel of the day is Professor Pupin's triumph in devising a cable through which telephonic communications may be passed under the ocean. The Bell Telephone Company is reported to have bought the professor's patents for \$500,000, which, if authentic, establishes the system as a workable one on a revenue-earning basis, which is the true test of scientific success. Telephone messages on land have been sent 1,500 miles, but submarine messages meet with such obstructions as to render their transmission impracticable, as the electrical force is wasted before reaching its destination. Professor Pupin overcomes the great obstruction by a system of "induction coils" by which the current is so largely strengthened and economized that it will freely pass any distance. The same system, when applied to wires overland, will render it as

feasible to telephone from this city to Vancouver as from one street to the next. The reconstruction and relaying of cables will involve enormous expenditures, but, it will be forthcoming as soon as capitalists realize that "there is money in it," as there can hardly fail to be in an ocean telephone system. Imagine, if it is possible to conceive such a revolution, imagine calling, "Hello!" to friends in England, or anywhere in Europe, and being able to hear the vibrations which transmit the characteristic tones of their voices so that we, practically, hear them and they us talking across the Atlantic!

Singular Libel Suit.

One of the most singular libel suits on record was heard and decided recently in a Canadian Court. The complainant was a member of an eminent profession which, very justly, confers some social dignity on those in its ranks. He had occasion to call upon a person who is engaged in trade, consequently, of inferior social rank—according to conventional rules. The interview was not a very placid one; indeed, a slight verbal blizzard seems to have arisen between them. The trader, in the heat of his remonstrance against something said by his visitor, applied to him the ejaculatory phrase, "My dear fellow." Thereupon, the interviewer went away in high dudgeon, vowing vengeance against the user of this conventional exclamation. He entered suit to recover damages; expert evidence was heard as to the meaning and ordinary implication of the phrase "My dear fellow," the result being that he was awarded a small sum as damages, as a solace to his wounded dignity. Were such an incident introduced into a comic opera it would be taken as meant, that is for a joke. It is no joke, however, to have to defend a suit for damages in a law court for using an expletive phrase which is wholly innocent of any meaning in the least degree derogatory to the person to whom it is addressed. Courts of law ought not to be used for such trivialities.

New Zealand's Crop and Other Returns.

The New Zealand "Trade Review" states the area and the yield per bushel of three cereals grown in the Colony last year as follows:—Acres of wheat crop, 269,749, average yield per acre, 31.81 bushels; of oat crop, 398,243 acres, average yield 40.99 bushels per acre; of barley, 48,003 acres, average yield, 33.02 bushels. The returns indicate a decrease in area devoted to wheat, and proportionate increase in that used for oats. The demand for oats has been exceptionally heavy, owing to the exports to Africa having been unusually large, which is one of the illustrations of how a war in one part of the world affects the operations of distant countries. New Zealand sprang to arms in defence of the Empire with most honour-