

18. On the face of it this rate is absurdly low. Any sensible underwriter must hesitate to accept such a rate. The tariff is supposed to have produced uniformity, but under this clause is ample room for cutting. We are to suppose that a cautious Office, recognizing the inadequate rate, will not touch at 3s. Should the risk be morally sound, they quote, say, 20s. Proponent goes to another Company, shows his acceptance notice, and this Company, anxious, perhaps, to obtain premiums "anyhow," accepts for less. This cutting does not tend to maintain the prestige of insurance business. Risks, such as drapers, oil and colourmen, general stores, furniture shops. The buildings are rated at 5s. per cent., their contents 12s. 6d. per cent. Is not this too wide a difference, for practically the risk is one and the same? During the first year of the tariff oil and colourmen paid the 12s. 6d. per cent. for building and contents, with few exceptions, without demur. The new tariff rates buildings 5s., contents 12s. 6d. I need only refer you to the experience Offices had in settling their losses after the great fire to show justification for drawing attention to this matter. We learn wisdom from failure, and we discern what will do by what will not do. Another clause of general rating scale reads: If in the occupation of more than one person or firm for purposes other than as private dwelling only, charge 1s. per cent. extra premium. Is not this altogether too modest a loading? It is quite possible to find under one roof a draper, fancy goods, carpenter's workshop, and oil and colourman; for such risk tariff provides rate 5s., with 5s. extra for class and an additional 1s. per cent. under above-mentioned clause—rate, 11s. per cent. Another case: A building of brick, with slate or iron roof, lined and ceiled with wood, canvas and paper, may have as occupants, each plying their separate trades, a tobacconist, stationer, milliner, and furniture shop; and the tariff permits acceptance for 5s. per cent., with loading of 1s. per cent. under same clause. I ask: Is this rate sufficient to cover the heavy risk we run? I desire now to deal with the classification of risks. Stabling is not to entail on adjacent buildings the extra charge which is entailed by proximity to other wooden buildings of certain classes. We can now accept a dwelling without loading for its contiguity to stables. In business or poor neighbourhoods it is not unusual for a dwelling to have a stable on either side, possibly a third at rear. When we consider the surroundings of the ordinary stable attached to a dwelling, the careless use of lamp or candle, the frequency with which an outbreak of fire can be traced to a stable, it seems that loading is needed to weight our present low rate (minimum, 6s. per cent.) for wood, lath and plaster dwelling with slate or iron roof. I myself within the last two months settled a loss; building completely destroyed through fire breaking out in an adjoining stable. The building is re-erected, yet, with this known danger staring us in the face, the tariff allows its acceptance without loading. A brick carpenter's workshop, with few or many employes, can

be accepted at 5s. per cent. with a loading of 5s. per cent. for class. Despite the perhaps printed notice, "No smoking," we know that men during the luncheon hour do smoke, and smoke reading a newspaper while perched on a bench surrounded by shavings. It may appear almost trivial to mention this, but "it is close observation of little things that makes success assured." The fire inspector's eye becomes critical of such surroundings; to protect ourselves I could wish an added rate. Again, I think the amateur workshop risk fully as dangerous as the professional for these reasons: The amateur generally works at night; he, too, smokes; his lighting is more dangerous than that of the workman. The workman has gas jets adapted to suit his bench; the amateur invariably plants lamp or candle on some portion of his work, or will permit a small boy or girl to hold the light for "father." It is a simple matter to sketch an accurate plan of a risk and its immediate surroundings. To illustrate doors, windows, lifts and well-holes for rating purposes our tariff provides table of rates. The matter is correct, but the real and important fact of true valuation, which actually represents the heart of the matter, is not nearly sufficiently looked into. Once the Company is satisfied as to value, a proposal is accepted, but I suggest that on renewal, especially outside the metropolitan area, general storekeepers, grocers, drapers and the like, where stocks will "fluctuate," the insured be requested to furnish a statutory declaration as to the present value of stock insured. The tariff has now been in force fifteen months; we all know the adverse criticism freely hurled at it, not alone by those in ignorance of its workings. Melbourne's great fire somewhat diluted the uncomplimentary remarks. I have made a careful study of the tariff, and although I can see faults in it, I have grown quite fond of it. Here I would impress upon all fire insurance men the necessity of mastering the information contained therein. It is curious to note the lack of knowledge evinced. If difficult to those supposed to understand it, how much more to outsiders? To this lack of knowledge I attribute much of its unpopularity. It is not sufficient to quote from a tabled list. Let a man have the subject thoroughly under control of description, and it more easily proves intelligible to the inquiring listener.

INSURANCE COMPANIES IN CHILI.

A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO DRIVE FOREIGN COMPANIES OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

The recent attempt made by the Argentine Government to penalise foreign insurance companies doing business in the Republic appears to have stimulated Chilean politicians to enter upon an attempt to discover whether they cannot similarly extract money from foreign insurance companies doing business in Chili. The companies are, of course, not asked in coarse and vulgar language to pay up or clear out; but for all practical purposes this is the demand conveyed in a