board of directors a few seats were given to influential but unsuspecting persons, whose business engagements, or indifference to such matters prevented them from looking into the workings of the concern, and their names were used to give to such an appearance of respectibility and good standing.

The affairs of the companies were in all cases conducted, and the funds handled by the few incorporators who made themselves managing directors and officers; generally by two or three, for whose personal benefit and profit the corporations were created. For example: in one company the person chiefly concerned in its organization caused himself to be elected secretary, and one of the two managing directors, he could read the Secretary's (his own) "reports of the financial condition of the company" to himself and the other managing director. They, as managing directors, would approve and report to the company that all was correct. Flourishing statements of the financial condition of the company would be published, and this would be the means of procuring additional insurance through the country.

This officer was putting money in his pocket, and the company was hopelessly insolvent. More than three-fourths of the risks of these companies were written at places outside, and generally remote from the city of St. Louis, where the home offices were located.

FIRE RECORD.—Cheltenham, County Peel, 22nd Nov.—A fire of doubtful origin, began in the store and Post-office of Wm Mather, stock totally destroyed; value, $1800; insured in Provincial for $1000, in British America $200. (British America had cancelled $800 on this stock a few days previous)—building owned by F. Allan. No insurance. Tracey's Hotel, frame; J. S. Tracey owner and occupier. Contents. Loss, $2,000, insured in Toronto Mutual $200. Building loss, $1,700, insured British America, $1,000. C. King. stock damaged by removal; loss, $300; insured in Provincial, $1,200, British America, $800.

ARSON.—Mr. E. Coote, of Montreal, the burning of whose premises was noticed last week, was committed on a charge of setting fire to the premises. It seems pretty clear that this is another attempt to realize on goods by defrauding insurance companies. Every preparation seems to have been made, with the object of making the fire "a success;" but strange to say, these preparations served a more useful purpose, by affording evidence of the incendiary's guilt.

—If fire insurance companies were not many of them, so ready to write on questionable risks, and if they would persistently reject every application for insurance where there has been anything short of a most searching and careful survey of the premises, property owners would eventually learn the economy and wisdom of a proper construction of buildings.

Commercial.

MONTREAL MARKET.

MONTREAL, November 29, 1870.

The snow which fell last week has left us, and we are now enjoying fine mild weather, with no indications of a wintery change.

Vessels have now all cleared from this Port, and only a few wood barges and oyster schooners occupy the Harbour.

Trade during the past week, has been rather inactive in most branches. Iron and Hardware owing to the close of navigations have been in rather limited demand.

Flour and wheat have been very dull, and for most part of the week, buyers and sellers have been apart in their views.

The Imports this year as recorded at the Custom House are largely increased from last year. The following figures for some of the leading articles will show the increased from 1st January to 31st October, 1870, as compared with the same period of 1869:—

	1869.	1870.
Woollens	$137,748	$217,413
Cottons	81,061	126,887
Silks, &c.	40,050	46,599
Brandy	8,633	69,312
Gin	8,774	21,873
Rum	2,854	9,242
Coffee	10,961	11,944
Green Tea	146,929	144,625
Black do	12,801	13,643
Wine	26,840	41,050
Raw Sugar	55,765	240,019
Cane Juice	101,401	5,270
Dried Fruit	139,093	130,761
Molasses	56,712	15,253
Leaf Tobacco	33,184	33,848

During the past week, the Transfer Books of some of the leading Banks have been closed, and there has been very little activity in the stock market in consequence; Sterling Exchange is quiet at 109 to 109¼.

ASHES.—*Pots*—There has been a decline in the market, and Firsts have sold from $5.90 down to $5.80; market closing, heavy at $5.80; Seconds $5.00; Thirds $4.50. *Pearls*—There have been few orders from abroad, and the market during the week has been rather easier, and prices have declined, market closing dull at $6.35 for firsts; and $6.20 for seconds. The stock at present in store is Pots 528 brls.; Pearls 562 brls, being a decrease of 505 brls. Pots, and an increase of 201 brls. of Pearls.

BOOTS AND SHOES.—In the prices of these articles, there is no change to note. All our wholesale houses are now preparing to take stock, and for a few weeks there will be very little business done worth recording.

COAL.—Generally speaking trade has been quiet. Scotch steam, however, has been in fair demand, but prices rule steady and unchanged.

CATTLE.—The market during the week has been well supplied, but there appears to be a preponderance of inferior stock, all first-class stock is readily taken up at last week's rate. Live Hogs have been in limited supply, but good prices have been obtained for all coming to market. Dressed Hogs are still scarce, the mild weather preventing them coming in the supply is hardly equal to the demands of Butchers, prices steady at $7.50 to $8.00.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.—The market has been rather dull, and no particular change in prices can be noted. Saltpetre is scarce and very little remains in first hands, the quotation is now $9.75 to $10.25; Cream Tartar Crystals are nominally 22c.; Brimstone and Sulphur are scarce, but unchanged in prices; Copperas, 90c. to $1; Epsom Salts are dull with limited sales, at $2 to $2.25; Soda Ash, nominal 2c. to 2½c.; Bleaching Powder is in small request and very little is offering; Caustic Soda is rather firmer, sales have taken place at 3¾c. to 3⅞c. but 4c. is now asked; Bi Carb is rather higher, $3.12½c. to $3.17½c. being the range for past week; Sal Soda has been firm, and sales have been reported from $1.30 to $1.40; prices of other articles are not changed, and the amount of business done has been limited.

FISH.—Most of the desirable kinds of fish are scarce, and prices are stiff. Dry Cod has been sold for good parcels, $4.62½ to $5.12, the outside prices being for really good samples. Green Cod in barrels sells at $4.50 to $5; Salmon sells at $15.25 in barrels, and in tierces, at $22.50 to $23; Labrador split Herrings, $6 to $6.50; Round Herrings, $3 to $3.50.

FLOUR.—Receipts during the week, 29,147 brls. Total receipts from 1st January to date, 961,835 brls, against 895,937 brls. in corresponding period of 1869, being an increase of 65,898 brls. Shipments during the week, 18,185 brls.; total shipments from 1st January to date, 767,302 brls., against 786,170 brls. in corresponding period of 1869, being a decrease of 18,868 brls. Owing to the close of navigation there has been very little doing in this market, the demand for shipments having stopped. The advance noted last week has been lost, but holders are still asking prices which buyers will not give into. To-day the market closes dull with a general feeling of depression—prices are weak with only a local demand at the following rates: Superior Extra, $6.40 to $6.50; Extra, $6.25 to $6.30; Fancy, $5.80 to $5.95; Fresh Supers from Canada wheat, $5.60 to $5.70; Medium strong Supers, $5.75 to $5.85; Strong Bakers, $6 to $6.30; Welland Canal Flour, (free) $5.60 to $5.70; Canada Super No. 2, $5.25 to $5.30; Fine, $4.85 to $4.90; Middlings, $4 to $4.20; Pollards, $3.25 to $3.50; Upper Canada Bag Flour, $2.50 to $2.60; Oatmeal has advanced and is firm at $6 to $6.25.

FREIGHTS.—The rates from Montreal *via* Grand Trunk Railway and Montreal Ocean Steamship Comany's vessels from Portland to Liverpool are: Heavy grain 8s.; Flour 3s. 6d. Potashes 40s. to 50s.; Pearls, 50s. to 60s.; Butter and Cheese 62s. 6d., per gross ton; Pork or Beef, 6s. per brl. and 7s. 6d. per tierce.

GRAIN.—*Wheat*—Receipts for the past week, 192,924 bush. Total receipts from 1st January to date 6,394,897 bush., against 7,192,140 bushels, being a decrease of 797, 243 brls. Shipments during the week, 205,729 bushels; Total shipments from 1st January to date, 5,631.565 bushel, against 5,487,327 bushels in the corresponding period of 1869, being an increase of 144,238 bushels. Market has been dull and drooping all week, and closes almost nominal at $1.15 for No. 2, and $1.23 for No. 1 spring. *Oats*—the supply has been light but prices are firm at 40c. to 43c.; there is a good demand, and higher prices would be paid for really good samples. *Barley*—Markets very quiet and no change is noted on the prices of last week. *Peas*—A fair enquiry for this grain has been experienced all week, and prices are firm from 80c. to 87½c., but the supply has not been equal to the demand and no wholesale transactions have been reported. *Timothy* and *Flaxseed* are unchanged in prices, and the market has ruled very quiet and almost nominal.

GROCERIES.—*Teas*—Sales have been principally confined to retail lots of uncolored Japans, at 57½c. to 60c., in other kinds no business of any consequence has been done. *Sugar*—Sellers do not seem inclined at present to offer much of this article, and the only kind quoted are the ordinary grocery grades, at 8¾c. to 9¼c.; Scotch refined has been sold from $9 to $9.25 per 100 brls. Refinery prices are, dry crushed 12½c., crushed A, 11¾c.; Yellow refined, 9½c. to 10c.; Standard syrup, 44c.; Golden syrup, 50c. *Molasses*—No change to note in this market from last weeks rates, sales have been entirely confined to retail lots. *Fruit*—Layer Raisins were sold to some extent, at $1.70 to $1.75 for round lots, but none now are procurable under $1.80; Valencias are rather easier with sales at 7¾c. to 8c., round lots bringing a trifle less. Seedless raisins, 8½c. to 9c.; Sultanas are firm and held for 9½c. to 10c. Very little change to note in curants, almonds, filberts, or walnuts. *Coffee*—There has been a steady demand for local wants, Java, at 20c. to 24½c.; Laguayra, 17½c. to 18c.; Rio, 15c. to 16½c., and Maracaibo, 18½ to 19½.

HIDES AND SKINS.—Butchers green hides have been in good demand and nothing was procurable under 9½c. Pelts are scarce and in demand, and all offering were readily taken up at 80c. each.

HARDWARE.—Owing to the close of navigation, there has only been a very moderate business done for the past week, and in all probability owing to the advance in freights by the G. T. Railway, the dullness may continue for some time. Stocks are generally well assorted with the exception of Cut Nails and Lead which are scarce and firm, the former at $3.00 to $3.25, the latter at $6.50 to