

COMPANY SUES FOR DAMAGES.—In the Superior Court at Boston, on Friday last, there was a hearing before Judge Essenden in the case of the Bay State Metal Company vs. C. H. Hayes. The plaintiff sues to recover damages of defendant personally for failure to place a line of insurance on the property of plaintiffs. The agreement alleged was to furnish \$20,000 insurance. The insurance placed was only \$15,000. The defendant contends that under the laws of Massachusetts none can insure property but Massachusetts corporations and foreign companies duly authorized to do business here; that no individual can enter into a valid contract of fire insurance except under the provisions of the insurance law relating to Lloyds Association, and that an agreement that certain property shall be covered for a given time is itself a contract of insurance, and is, therefore, void. The Court reserved decision.

CANADIAN FIRE UNDERWRITERS' ASSOCIATION.

The usual quarterly meeting of the above Association was held in Montreal this week.

The following Managers from the west were present, in addition to the local Managers.

P. H. Sims, British America; J. G. Thompson, Lancashire Insurance Company; H. M. Blackburn, Sun Fire; James Boomer, Manchester Fire; Alfred Wright, Mercantile Fire, and P. McCallum, Hartford Fire.

PERSONALS.

Mr. Alexander Cromar, Superintendent of Agencies Royal Victoria Life Insurance Company, has been visiting the head office of his company in Montreal this week.

Mr. W. T. Booth, of the New York Life Insurance Company, was in Montreal this week engaged in increasing the amount held by the Canadian trustees, under the Insurance Act, by some \$210,000.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondent.

TORONTO LETTER.

The New Board of the Merchants Fire Insurance Co.—An Unfair Attack on the Secretary of the Toronto Board.—The Annual Meeting of the Toronto Board.—A Resolution—not, on the Agenda.

Dear Editor.—A rather unexpected change in the personnel of the Board of the Merchants Fire Insurance Company, one of the new non-tariff offices, was effected at its recent Annual Meeting. The Honble. George E. Foster, M.P., President, and E. Coatsworth, jr., Vice-President, failed of re-election. The new Board consists of Mr. ex-Alderman James Scott, President of the Northern Navigation Co., and a director of the Standard Bank, elected President, Mr. Thomas Kinnear, Vice-President, and Mr. R. E. Gibson, 2nd Vice-President.

My attention has been called to a bitter and unfair personal attack on Mr. McCuaig, Sec. of the Toronto Board, which has appeared in the Insurance "Times" of New York. It is made in the shape of special Toronto correspondence and signed "N." I think if the writer be not, himself a member of the Toronto Board, he has been at least inspired by some member. Moreover, he presumes to speak for the Toronto Board.

I reproduce for the special benefit of this masked enemy of a worthy citizen of Toronto the following extract from the writings of the old English theologian, Isaac Barrow:—

"It is a grievous perverting the design of speech to use it to the defaming and disquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an instrument of beneficial commerce and delectable conversation; that with it we might assist and advise, might cheer and comfort one another; we, therefore, in employing it to the disgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour do foully abuse it; and so doing render ourselves indeed worse than dumb beasts; for better far were it that we should say nothing than that we should speak ill."

The Annual Meeting of the Toronto Board will take place on the 3rd instant. There is promise of a light Agenda this year. There is really not much work of an important nature to be done at any time, especially since the rating of risks was handed over to a special rating officer. Meetings once a week have long since been discontinued, and they are now held fortnightly, and may be in the future but monthly. There is the usual gossip of a likely dissolution of the Board, but such an issue I do not look for. Outside the Board room members speak as if, for sundry reasons, which they set forth, they really desired a break up, but in annual conclave all such views seem to vanish. I have ventured to crystallize in the following mock Resolution these opinions as I have heard them on the street from time to time. Take it at its worth. Thus:

Whereas, it has been long apparent to many of the members of the Toronto Board that its one-time acknowledged usefulness to the Fire Insurance Companies has nearly, if not wholly, departed; That, although this position of affairs has resulted, or been evolved, in part from natural conditions and changing business circumstances, yet, the decay of morals, and the elusory habits of thought, diction and action unhappily prevalent have more largely contributed to the aforesaid result; therefore: Resolved that this Board be dissolved, and its formal resignation as a body be at once sent to the C. F. U. A. with the suggestion that the Association immediately take the necessary steps to install as permanent officials a Stamping Officer and Assistant, both subordinate to the C. F. U. A. and under its sole control and supervision.

Yours,

Ariel.

Toronto, 13th February, 1900.

The Editor CHRONICLE:—

I beg to offer the following opinion on the question submitted in your issue of the 2nd inst., and which was an extract from the "Daily States." To my mind, if it is shewn that from the volume of flame or other reasonable evidence, the fire must have occurred before 12 o'clock, then clearly the company carrying the risk up to that hour is liable for the loss, provided said fire was continuous. A company cannot cancel a