

give consideration to the sensible suggestions of Mr. Scotter, who says that the spread of a cotton fire can only be limited by giving more attention to the packing of bales. Briefly stated, the recommendations made to the British Fire Prevention Committee are that no dirt, sand or foreign matter be allowed to find its way with the cotton fibre into the compressed bale, as the foreign substances, friction and a change of temperature may cause combustion; that greater care be exercised in the means of transportation, and that the round or cylindrical bale be entirely substituted for the old huge, "turtle-back" bale hitherto seen at warehouse or mill. As Mr. Scotter remarks, in loading and unloading these bales, a free use of hooks reduces them to a ragged condition, and this very raggedness adds to the risk of conflagration, and feeds the flames when fire occurs.

The paper under review also points out that the use of some non-inflammable covering instead of coarse jute would remove the danger incidental to storage of cotton, and would probably avert the destruction of many a fine ship. Pipe smoking in the vicinity of cotton packing is also a great source of danger, and it is quite likely that many a ship on fire in mid-ocean owes its destruction to the ashes of burning tobacco dropped by the careless southern darkey into the heart of a cotton bale intended for export.

Mr. Scotter's reference to the greater freedom from fire in cotton bales shipped from Egypt and India ought to lead to a revolution in the present American system of packing and loading cotton. The subject is one of great interest not only to those engaged in the insurance business, but also to many a sailor who is in the habit of leaving port with death, in the form of smouldering cotton, as a messmate.

THE GENTLEMAN IN POLITICS.

Is it not possible to elevate the tone of Canadian politics?

The history of the session just ended is much too largely a record of reckless charges and counter-charges, of rude and distasteful epithets and ungenerous insinuations in Parliament and in the press. The authority of the Speaker has been frequently invoked to compel respect for the rules of the House; but that decency which has been compelled by the rules of debate should have been conceded to the laws of good taste. If one half of what Canadian politicians say of each other is true, no matter which party is in power, Canada is dominated by rascals. Nine times out of ten a coarse, offensive imputation degrades in the public mind the man who utters it more than it does the man against whom it is directed; but the coarseness of this kind of debate is a positive injury to the Dominion. Candour is a highly commendable virtue, but, in good society, it does not require a man to be always making offensively candid remarks about his neighbours. The men who pride themselves overmuch upon being

blunt are generally so anxious to call every spade a spade that they go around calling all kinds of implements spades that are not spades at all. The truth is that coarse abuse is essentially the weapon of a weak debater. It requires less ability, less intelligence, to impute unworthy motives than it does to intelligently criticise a measure upon its merits. Argument, ridicule, satire, are all potent and legitimate weapons, and the men in Parliament and in the Press who are masters of these weapons are not under the necessity of resorting to invective or insinuation. It is remarkable how able a man will sometimes fall into the blunder of abusing his enemy. Sir Charles Tupper's attack on General Gascoigne is fresh in the minds of our readers. It is doubtful if that attack made any friends for Sir Charles, or any enemies for the General. The incident was no doubt due to what Mr. Foster calls "a moment of weakness." Take another incident, however, with which Sir Charles was connected, as showing his strength:—the debate on the resolution about the death of Mr. Gladstone. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech was a veritable triumph of oratory; but the adroitness and tact and evident sincerity with which Sir Charles complimented him upon the occasion had the effect of dividing the honours. If our public men only knew it, the people are nauseated with the bickerings which characterize our politics, and are disposed to applaud even the appearance of cordiality between statesmen of opposite camps. In reading reports of speeches in Parliament, or editorials in the party press, one is often impressed by the cleverness but seldom by the fairness of the argument. This acerbity of debate is suggestive of nothing but an undue anxiety to get or to retain office. Outside of the professional politicians, the people of Canada are well convinced that there is little or nothing to choose between the two parties on the score of personal integrity. There are good men on both sides and there are men on both sides who are less good, but this assumption that there is only one issue in Canada worth discussing, and that, which set of public men is more worthy of the penitentiary, is degrading to Canada, and tends to obscure issues of real importance.

The public have a right to expect of their representative men frank recognition of whatever is good in each other and, at least, the courtesies of ordinary social life.

"GAIN AND LOSS EXHIBIT" OF AMERICAN LIFE COMPANIES.

Following the course adopted for 1895 and 1896, the American Life insurance companies have been required by the insurance commissioners of some of the States to fill out the schedule in their annual report for 1897, known as the "Gain and Loss Exhibit." This feature of the report was adopted by the convention of Insurance Commissioners in 1894 for use the following year, though only three or four of the commissioners enforced the requirement at first and