

of finding one's present worth, &c., are all laid down in so practical a manner that the student who has mastered these subjects in the "College" will have little difficulty in applying his knowledge in practical life. No doubt some who have attended these schools have proved very inefficient, because too idle to complete their term satisfactorily, or without a taste for a book-keeper's occupation; but this proves nothing against the utility of the schools themselves.

However, we care not as to the means by which a knowledge of books is acquired, so long as our traders are possessed of it. We do insist that no "storekeeper" is entitled to credit who cannot give an intelligible statement of his affairs when it is asked for. If we had more book-keepers in the ranks of trade we would see more successful men; the effect would be to lessen the friction and grease the wheels of business, rendering it more satisfactory, and often more profitable, to all concerned.

#### STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

On another page of this paper will be found the forty-fifth annual report of this Company. Notwithstanding so lengthened a career the business is well maintained and exhibits a steady progress. During the five years ending November, 1870, new policies were issued to the amount of £5,713,813 stg. while the claims for the same period were but £1,591,732. The accounts are prepared and published in the form required by the new Act of the British Parliament, (33 and 34 Vic., Cap. 61) and are quite explicit. The expenses of management last year were £48,039 or 9½ per cent. of the premium receipts—a very moderate rate of expenditure in comparison with the general experience on this side of the Atlantic. It will be noticed that the funds are chiefly invested in mortgages in the United Kingdom, which are very safe investments, and yield a good return.

#### THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CROPS.

The prosperity of Canada depends so much on a good or a bad harvest, that men of business naturally feel some anxiety as to the present condition and prospects of the growing crops. The spring came in this season very early, and there has been ample time for farming operations, which has been made good use of by our industrious yeomen. During the past two or three weeks, however, the weather has not been favourable—there being too much cold and too little rain. The meadows are consequently rather bare, and a short hay crop is threatened. The fall wheat, as a general rule, looks luxuriant and

promising. From some districts there have been complaints in regard to winter-killing; but the writer has passed through some of these localities, and although occasional signs of damage were to be seen, still even from most of the injured fields there is a likelihood of obtaining about an average yield. We consider the prospects of a good crop of fall wheat to be excellent at the present time. On account of the backward weather, the spring crops and the gardens, have made very little progress. No injury has been suffered, however, which a few warm showers will not remedy. The orchards are now covered with blossoms, and present an exceedingly beautiful appearance. Taking the Province as a whole, and all kind of farm produce, the prospect before us is satisfactory. Circumstances may arise, of course, to disappoint our present prospects and expectations. But our business friends (some of whom may be carrying too much on their shelves or in their books) will be glad to know that, at least, the present state of the crops warrant the hope of a good harvest this season.

**THE BRADFORD FIRE.**—In the proper column will be found the particulars of one of the most sweeping conflagrations that ever visited a Canadian town, involving the destruction of a large amount of property, and leaving many families in comparative poverty. Bradford is a town of about 1,600 inhabitants, situated on the line of the Northern Railway, and like all our country towns and villages, is largely made up of wooden structures. Dry seasons, such as the present has so far proved, exposes all these places to great peril, especially as their facilities for the extinguishment of fires are usually very inadequate. In this case, a strong north-west wind carried the flames with the utmost rapidity from one inflammable object to another, till the fuel was exhausted. Some of the local companies will lose heavily, but as they have been unusually fortunate for some months past, they can bear the blow with less chagrin. Were it not for the large sums they will hand over at once in cash to the sufferers, the calamity, bad enough in any case, would be immensely aggravated.

#### Insurance.

**FIRE RECORD.**—St. Catharines, May 16.—About four o'clock this morning a fire was discovered in a shed in rear of the frame dwelling on the corner of Duke and James street, occupied by Mr. G. P. M. Ball, County Treasurer. The alarm was given by some tow-horse drivers who were then passing the place. They merely shouted "Fire!" as they proceeded on their way, and made no effort whatever to extinguish the flames, which could then have been subdued by a few pailfuls of water. The cries aroused Mr. Riley, who owns the property, and resided in an adjoining dwelling, and he and his family endeavored to extinguish the flames, and alarmed the inmates and neighborhood, but before assistance was obtained the flames spread rapidly to the barn in

rear, and communicated with an adjoining barn, owned by Mr. Wm. A. Mittleberger, Town Treasurer; and, simultaneously, Mr. Riley's dwelling, on James street, and Mr. Mittleberger's residence, on Duke street, were enveloped by the fire, which also extended to and devoured the dwelling owned and occupied by Mr. A. F. Patterson, manufacturer. The fire brigade was early on the ground, but before its arrival all the buildings mentioned were doomed to total destruction. As usual, there was a scarcity of water, but by considerable exertion the firemen stayed the progress of the fire at Mr. Patterson's, saving a dwelling only a few feet distant, owned by Mrs. Bains. The cause of the fire is unknown, but it may be charged to carelessness with ashes. The following will probably cover all losses: P. Riley, buildings \$4,000, furniture \$500; insured in the Hartford Insurance Company for \$2,000. Wm. Mittleberger, buildings \$2,500, furniture \$400; insured in Liverpool and London and Globe for \$1,300. A. F. Patterson, buildings \$600, furniture \$400; insured in Agricultural (Watertown) and F. D. Mutual for \$1,300. G. P. M. Ball, furniture, \$800 to \$1,000; no insurance.

Bradford, May 23.—A fire broke out in a bakery, caused, it is said, by a defective flue, and the wind being strong from the north-east, the flames soon spread consuming every store on the main street, and sweeping over about 25 acres of ground. A thousand persons were rendered homeless by the conflagration. There were three fire engines on the ground, and the men in charge of them worked with a will but to little purpose. Provisions were sent from Toronto, and contributions of money, provisions, &c., were made by various parties for the relief of the sufferers, whose wants will no doubt be fully attended to. The following is a correct list of the stores and dwelling houses which were consumed. On Holland, Bingham, and William streets, the buildings consumed are those belonging to or occupied by the following:—John Stibbs, baker; Mrs. Stibbs, millinery; Joseph Deacon, drug store; W. Astor, barber's shop; John Boddy, general store; Alexander Campbell, general store; J. Spence, paint shop; Mrs. Spence, millinery; Wm. Belfry, general store; Mrs. Bingham, boarding-house; John Stevenson, saddlery; J. Davis, hotel; Dowler & Sparling, Murphy Bros., T. Drifill & Sons, Robert Stewart, J. & W. Goodchild, Strong Bros., and Gibson Cook, all general stores; Bingham's hotel; J. Overton, photograph gallery; James Willcock, watchmaker; John Montgomery, shoe store; Edward Bingham, tannery; Kennell & Adams, tinsmiths; Scott & Graham, saddlery; J. Ormsby, shoe store, Wm. Sutcliffe, tailor; H. S. Broughton, furniture; Thomas Kilkenny & Son, cabinet shop; J. H. Hockridge, carriage shop; Mrs. Walker & Graham, millinery; Thos. Hayton, store; J. & D. Borowman's marble works; Grover's hotel; Mrs. Dodd, store, Mark Scalan, law office; Mrs. Ann Douglass, post office; J. W. Wilson, law office; H. Swallow, hardware; — Armstrong, blacksmith; H. Smith, grocery; Thos. McBrien, store; T. Walmesley, butcher. Among the private dwellings which were consumed were the residences of Moses Astor, Stibbs, Belfry, Geo. White, John Stevenson, B. Barnard, Reeve, J. McL. Stevenson, T. Montgomery, John Patterson, Edward Bingham, W. Chambers, Thomas Kilkenny, T. Reynolds, Mrs. Long, T. Hayton, Drs. Porter and Taylor, J. Wainwright, J. McBrien, Thos. Drifill, — McFarlane, — Pulford, and others. The conflagration covered, it is estimated, at least twenty-five acres of ground.

**The Losses and Insurance.** Bingham's Hotel, loss \$12,000, insurance \$11,000; Falconbridge's store, loss \$10,000, insurance \$6,000; J. W. H. Wilson's office, loss \$1,000; Strong Bros. (stock), loss \$17,000, insurance \$9,500; Strong Bros. building, loss \$7,000, insurance \$4,000; Scott and Graham, loss \$2,500, insurance \$1,000; T. Drifill & Sons, loss \$20,000, insurance \$10,000; W. Tunis, loss \$2,300, insurance \$700; Mrs.