

it is the duty of one to ask, and of the other to give, what is fair and right,—in other words, when the basis of the transaction is the golden rule of doing unto others as we would be done by. Let one or other depart from this principle, and at once there is created an almost insuperable barrier, which will only yield the fruits of discord, and end in dissatisfaction to one or both sides. While not arguing on the merits of the case of Ross Bros., we have there an appropriate illustration of the point just made. Who violated the old rule,—the insured or the adjuster? That both should have acted up to the standard is impossible, for when, in estimating a loss to a dry goods stock of the value of \$18,000, there appears the enormous difference of \$7,000 and \$2,000, it stands to reason that one side or the other must be "squeezing" without any regard to the principle of fairness and equity.

Now, I am going to make a statement which may, and doubt less will, meet with much opposition—still, it is one of the beliefs I have, and I must state it. I believe the professional adjuster of this Continent has done more to create ill-will between the insured and the companies than will ever be fully realized or known, certainly more than the class will ever redeem. I state the opinion without any qualm of conscience, that the underlying principle of a professional adjuster in many cases (not in all, I am happy to say, for here in Montreal we have men who are above such a thing) is not what is the man's loss, but how little can I get off for, and how much salvage can I make for the company? The very nature of the business tends in this direction, it is demoralizing to the man, and the adjuster who rises superior to it is a treasure worth keeping and sustaining.

We cannot, I suppose, do without professional adjusters, but we can and should instil into them that their duty is not so much to make a salvage as it is to investigate each claim in a business-like way, to act on the square, and to see that in every honest case, the insured gets his honest loss.

Another evil of our present system, and equally as deplorable as an unreliable professional adjuster, is the too frequent use of the system of appraisal. How frequently is the course of procedure something like this: Mr. A. is a professional adjuster who is employed to adjust a loss, he visits the premises forthwith decides an appraisal is necessary, employs Mr. B. to represent the companies, and the assured is called upon to employ Mr. C. for the same purpose. Thus there is a two-fold opportunity for "charging," a double prospect of breaking the "Golden Rule," and the greatest probability of causing intense dissatisfaction to all concerned. In this way the cost of adjusting losses is becoming burdensome, while it is not in my judgment accomplishing any good end.

My own impression is that the old-fashioned English system of "assessing" is that which is needed to restore equilibrium and confidence. Instead of employing every Tom, Dick or Harry who may have a claim upon the companies, and in sympathy employed by them, let competent men be trained and engaged, specialists if you like, but men capable of assessing damages minutely and correctly; let there be more confidence between the assured and the assessor, more personal negotiation, then there will be less probability of repetition of the Ross Bros. case, and many similar cases, our adjusting will be done more economically, and greater satisfaction will, I am sure, be generally experienced. It is not necessary that a dry goods loss must be adjusted by a professional adjuster, and appraised by a man who has made a failure in the dry goods business. Let us have more common sense in adjusting, and I am confident that the feeling which now generally exists, that it is the practice of companies to "beat down" the unfortunate loser, will disappear, and confidence will be restored between the assured and the insurer.

Correspondence.

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

TORONTO LETTER.

A rally of the fire fiend.—"Lloyds' wild cats"—*The Toronto Board investigates the electric lighting and power hazard*—*Mr. A. I. Hubbard*—*C. E. Goad, C. E.*, "bon voyage"—*The new Plate Glass "combine."* *Barberous.*

DEAR EDITOR,

After a reasonable rest in Ontario, the realization of the insurance monies for the benefit of whom it may concern seems to be once more making progress. Midland, Gananoque, St. Mary's, Niagara Falls, Collingwood, Oshawa, have all been heard from, and as a consequence adjusters and appraisers are overrun with work. The closing weeks and days of any year are always times of special anxiety for insurance managers. Naturally your correspondent, as interested in Ontario, would like it to prove itself the "banner province" as regards profit for 1894. I really believe it will be so unless December gives us more than the usual average of loss.

I do not know if your insurance friends are in frequent receipt of circulars, statements, etc., soliciting business, and emanating from New York usually, from parties representing the various Lloyds' fire organizations, which lately have manifested great activity. It is not likely that many of the well informed ones will attempt to place surplus lines through such media, but if any do or contemplate doing so, it would be well for them to ascertain what security is offered for the payment of possible losses, always assuming all other details to be satisfactory. The *Insurance Age* states that a Mr. Hess sued the Guarantee & Accident Lloyds for \$1,000. One hundred members owing him \$10 each, he has to sue each individual. He has sued one, gained a verdict for \$10, carrying \$21.50 costs. The judgment debtor has now appealed! A nice out-look ahead for Mr. Hess. It is stated that the Supreme Court of Illinois holds that individual members of any Lloyds Insurance Association are liable for unpaid claims of the association, as having no statutory authority to do what they assume to do and having usurped the powers of a corporation, not being one in fact. This means I suppose the unlimited liability of each member to extent of his total belongings. "A horde of Lloyds' wild cats have overrun Illinois," a correspondent says, and that the Insurance Department of New York is to blame for their propagation and growth.

The Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters have been giving special attention to the fire hazard attending the use of electric light and power, especially the extra hazard where power is taken from a trolley wire. The evidence so far goes to show that the current from a trolley wire had better be left alone, as experts say reasonable safety cannot be looked for, under its use, however well protected. A higher or any rate hardly meets the case if this be true. \$3,204,000 for fires in U.S. during 1893 from electric wires and lights certainly beats the "kerosene record."

I learn that Mr. A. I. Hubbard, of their Montreal staff, has been appointed manager at Toronto by the London Guarantee & Accident Co. Mr. Chas. E. Goad, of insurance plans fame, has bidden us goodbye for a time, and gone to the West Indies on a business trip, with, I hope, a little pleasure combined.

At last, the Plate Glass Companies, after several attempts, seem to have united in a tariff of rates. This agreement, duly protected by penalties, etc., is likely to last longer than former ones. It goes into force on 1st prox, I believe. Much complaint has been made of the excessive cutting of rates in a wild competition, up to date. A better prospect of profit is now before the shareholders.

Barbers, as you know, are reputed to be incessant talkers and gossips. When last in your city I met a silent one. Nevertheless I tried to get a little humor out of him. When finishing me off he said: "Will you have witch-hazel or hay rum applied?" Thinking to be facetious I said, "which?" using a Western form, but he did not or would not see me, and repeated his formula, whereupon I replied, "hay rum" and closed the deal.

Yours,

ARIEL.

TORONTO 28th, Nov., 1894.