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READ YOUR INSURANCE CONTRACTS.

HOW many people are familiar with the provisions of their insurance contracts? How many ever take the trouble to read the conditions of their contracts? While the omission to read the terms shows a beautiful faith in human nature, it is not fair to either insured or insurer. The companies, in their own interests, are not likely to insert unfair clauses, the law of competition forbids. But the insured is not likely to observe very faithfully conditions of the very existence of which he is ignorant.

Mr. Justice Metcalfe of Winnipeg has just given a decision which is calculated to impress policyholders with the importance of reading their policies. The case was that of the Prairie City Oil Company against the Standard Mutual Fire Insurance Company, for \$3,500. In giving judgment for the defendant company, the learned judge pointed out that the defence was most technical, but the insured having made the contract must abide by its terms strictly. Neither the want of knowledge of the effect of the contract nor the carelessness of the insured to inform himself of its contents in any way helped him in his difficulty. The defence was that gasoline had been kept on the premises contrary to one of the express provisions of the contract. For the plaintiff company, it was argued that gasoline was an illuminating oil, and that the policy was wide enough to cover the plaintiff's general stock. The judgment is absolutely sound. The Standard Mutual Fire Company having in express terms made it a condition of its contract that gasoline should not be kept on the premises, any argument as to the nature of gasoline, or its effect upon the average of risk, was entirely beside the question.

REPORTS from Washington announce that within two months there will be a gathering either there or in Ottawa of representatives of the United States and Canadian Governments to discuss a commercial treaty between the two countries. The announcement is calculated to create some uneasiness in Canadian industrial circles. While everybody is glad that tariff war has been averted by the friendly relations of Secretary Knox and Mr. Fielding, nobody who is interested in Canadian manufacturing industry wants to see the reciprocity idea carried too far. As a burnt child dreads the fire, so does Canada shrink from treaty negotiations with esteemed neighbours who always get the better end of the bargain. There is no finality about any tariff agreement with the United States, and any reciprocity arrangements are likely

to be abandoned when they have served the purpose of destroying certain Canadian industries. The Dominion has been forced to find new markets by the churlish attitude of Congress in past years, and would be foolish indeed to throw away those markets at the bidding of Congress. Moreover the dawn of Imperial Preferential Trade is evidently about to break, and it would be a stupendous folly amounting to a crime for Canada to embarrass itself in any negotiations with the rest of the Empire by any premature treaty with the United States. If Washington is unusually amiable towards Ottawa just now, we do not think it ungracious to assume that its philandering is at least partly due to a natural desire to anticipate closer trade relations between the different parts of the British Empire.

THE Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, QUEBEC BUDEGET.

Provincial Treasurer, introduced his budget on Tuesday. He estimates the ordinary revenue for the next fiscal year at \$5,904,534, and the ordinary and extraordinary expenditure at \$5,707,991, leaving a ending June 30, 1909, were \$6,082,187, and the amount of \$7,633 expected to be earned as railway subsidies. The ordinary receipts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1909, were \$6,082,137, and the ordinary expenditure \$5,441,880, leaving a surplus of \$640,307. The extraordinary expenditure for the year was \$90,000. In addition to the ordinary revenue, the Government received an aggregate of \$2,776,553, including \$90,978 trust funds and deposits, \$2,394,000 Dominion grant, and \$288,500 transferred from special deposit on Q. M. O. & O. Railway account. In addition to the expenditure already named, the Government advanced \$412,130 for the construction of the new Montreal jail, paid \$54,907 in repayment of trust funds and deposits, \$10,000 subsidy to the Quebec bridge, \$2,602,500 for redemption of public debt loan of 1898, making, with other items, a total of \$3,161,072.51. The excess of all expenditure over all receipts was \$157,787.66. For the first nine months of the current fiscal year the ordinary revenue was \$4,468,941, and the ordinary expenditure \$3,975,245, leaving a surplus of \$493,696. The extraordinary expenditure for the same period was \$73,000. The final result of the year's operations will probably show a surplus of ordinary revenue over ordinary and extraordinary expenditure of over \$400,000.

In view of the Government's liberal policy regarding agriculture and education, the financial affairs of the Province appear to be in a highly satisfactory condition.