

tachment reached home again within the week. Later, measures of a practical quieting kind have aided in restoring somewhat of content and patience, the unpaid workmen being now in a fair way to recover their dues, failure and delay in liquidating, which was the source of the trouble and discontent. It appears the Fire Insurance Companies were badly scared, judging by the number of their representatives gathered at the Soo recently. I have heard of some threatened closing up of agencies and cancellation of risks, but I doubt if all we have heard was quite true. It is earnestly to be hoped that ere long the Clergue industries, or many of them, will be able to resume work, whoever operates them. It would, in a sense, be a national calamity if these should become wrecks, seeing how much money was invested in them, and the admitted business possibilities and prospects before most of them.

Twenty years ago the Fire Insurance Companies were in eager pursuit of what are known as "farm risks." They could not get enough of them on their books. Special terms and inducements were offered county agents to secure them, and more than one of our leading British companies were prominent in the then favourite quest. Fifteen years later farm risks fell into disfavour, the losses and expenses far exceeding the premiums in many instances, and until recently, very few companies would write farm risks at all. To-day, there seems to be a tendency to once more accept these risks. It is true too, that under the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association ratings, a somewhat higher rate of premium is called for, so that a margin of profit may be possible. It is affirmed by those who know that if a strict selection of risks is insisted on, and personal surveys of all risks made by the agent or inspector, that a once favoured business will be found to regain its position. My own opinion is that it will be an experiment even yet, under the newer conditions.

We are advised of the appointment by the Royal Insurance Company of Mr. Charles McLean Stinson as local manager in Toronto District for that Company, Messrs. Kay and Banks resuming their old status of sole general agents, in which capacity they gave satisfaction to the Royal management for many years. In like manner, the Canadian manager of the Atlas Assurance Company announces the appointment of Mr. A. Waring Giles, late inspector, to be local manager of the Atlas, Messrs. Kay and Banks also to represent this Company in their general agency. The elevations and retention of these gentlemen in their several positions of trust and honour will, I think, be generally acceptable to the friends and patrons of the Royal and Atlas Companies in this community. Those who can speak from experience of the business abilities of both, confidently assert that the companies interested will find they have made judicious selections, and confided their interests to faithful capable representatives.

Yours,

ARIEL.

TORONTO, 6th October, 1903.

LIABILITY INSURANCE IN CANADA.

Editor of THE CHRONICLE:—

We understand that a conclusion has been arrived at by most of the companies writing Liability Insurance in Canada, that it will be impossible for them to continue doing so at the present prevailing premium rates, without incurring further heavy losses. With this object in view, there is a movement now on foot among the Canadian

managers of the majority of the companies writing this line of insurance, to come together and arrange for the establishment of a uniform tariff, by which they all will be governed in selling Liability Insurance in this country in future.

As there is not at present available any combined experience of this business in Canada which would serve as a basis from which a tariff could be framed, the first step in the arranging of the same would seem to be for each company to furnish statements showing their actual loss ratios on each of the different classes of liability risks carried by them in the past, from which information the proper rates necessary to be charged on each class of risk, could, no doubt, be readily arrived at. What trouble and expense would be gone to in this connection by those participating would, we think, be amply repaid in a very much improved condition of Liability Insurance in this country, as when the combined loss experience of the different companies is arrived at, the figures thus shown will, without doubt, quickly convince any "doubting Thomases" as to the wisdom of increasing rates, and adhering to a uniform tariff, which could be changed as often in the future as the experience of the companies called for.

In the interests of the Liability business in Canada, it is sincerely to be hoped that all the companies will come together at any early date in this connection, and arrive at some mutual agreement by which the present unsatisfactory state of affairs can be remedied.

OBSERVER.

LONDON LETTER.

London, 24th Sept., 1903.

FINANCE.

Just when the stock market had, as we all fondly imagined, touched bottom, there has been a further weakening of quotations in consequence of the cabinet crisis. It is true prices are not much lower, but, as they were already excessively low, especially in high class securities, a little relapse goes a long way. Consols are now nearly down to 88, and it is therefore not surprising that some banks, in accordance with their conservative principle, should have commenced to write down their holdings of consols to 85. In the previous security there has been a loss of ten points since the declaration of peace last year. Part of this must, in common fairness, however, be put down to the reduction of interest for 2½ per cent. to 2¼ per cent. from the beginning of last April.

Money gets harder and the Bank is expected to again raise its discount rate. Gold shipments are leaving here for South America, Egypt, Germany and Russia, and we are in expectation of the usual autumnal demand from the United States. Some of this drain will now be diverted to Paris, but there are still serious fears about the Bank of England gold reserve, which has to be protected at all costs.

The South African mining market waits for the report of the Rand Native Labour Commission, which is pretty certain to be in favour of encouraging and arranging for the introduction of a couple of hundred thousand Chinese labourers. Public opinion, throughout the Transvaal is anti-Chinese, but magnate opinion, the wishes of the mine bosses, is what tells, and the majority of the labour commissioners are known to be pro-Chinese. All this assertion is, of course, based upon the supposition that the news we get from South Africa can be relied upon. But, always, it has to be remembered that that sub-continent has before now been known as the "Land of Lies."