rience this is not at all impossible, perhaps not improbable. It therefore behooves all interested, more especially our money-loaning institutions who are offering such inducements in this direction, to be very cautious that the bounds of prudence be not overstepped, of which we apprehend there is at least some danger.

BY an announcement elsewhere, it will be seen that Messrs. Wilkins & Co., brokers, of Detroit, offer the bonds of the Detroit and Milwaukee Railway at low rates. This road is now working in connection with the Great Western and Michigan Central as to through traffic, under a new arrangement, the details of which are given in a speech of the Chairman of the Great Western Railway, which will also be found under the proper heading.

NORTH BRITISH AND MERCANTILE INSURANCE COMPANY.—The annual report of this company states the premium receipts in 1869, on the fire business, less re-insurances, at £505,429—an increase on 1868 of £89,884 18s. 2d. One-third of the above premiums was set aside to meet losses on unexpired policies of 1869. The fire losses for the year were £197,434, or scarcely 39 per cent. of the fire premiums, being much below the average. In the life department, 863 policies were issued, insuring £933,301, and yielding in premiums £30,922. There were 158 deaths, and the sums payable on account of the same amounted to £151,075. A dividend of 16 per cent., or 20s. per share, was declared, and the sum of £132,621 added to the reserve fund, making that fund now stand at £429,665, exclusive of the fire reserve before mentioned.

BUSINESS MATTERS IN MONTREAL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

MONTREAL, April 5th, 1870.

It is curious how the warmth of spring animates the ideas and hopes of business men, just as it opens the water courses, and thaws the frozen fields. I will venture to say that there are more hopeful views of the seasons trade, and visions of more buyers and better remittances in the minds of our merchants during the past sunny week, than at any time since the fall closed in; when they were calculating the amount of grain still in store; or the quantity of lumber to be moved at the close of our long winter.

A good number of buyers are here from all parts of the West. Stocks are generally well assorted, though not heavy, and it is a notable and happy feature, that retailers are very careful in buying; and that there is less anxiety and pressure to sell than in past seasons. Indeed, most of our wholesale people are resolved rather to keep their goods upon their shelves, than part with them on a weak risk. If any group of larger houses should take vigorous hold of the suggestion made in your last, to shorten the terms of credit, or at the least to do away with the utter nuisance of renewals, they would find amongst the trade here a very general feeling in favor of such a move.

I know you have one or two prominent examples in Toronto, of houses declining to do business on longer terms than 4 months, and it needs but a few examples set here, and a fair trial of the principle to convince our dealers that it is practicable; most of us have long felt bitterly that it is desirable.

A couple of cases of arrest, which occurred here last week, are well calculated to warn "special-pleading" purchasers, and to show that the leniency and long-suffering for which wholesalers are noted, where customers are concerned, cannot be presumed upon for ever. A comfortable looking merchant from the western end of Ontario, who failed last fall for the second time, and visited this city in March, on some business connected with a patent, was arrested by a dry goods house for obtaining goods under false pretences, having purposely concealed from the house in question, while making a statement of his affairs to them, the fact that he owed a debt of old standing to a grocery firm, in addition to current obligations which he admitted. He is enjoying the cold comforts of the jail meantime.

The other party arrested, sad to say, was a lady from Ottawa, and the charge was somewhat similar. Some time before Christmas she bought a nice little stock of Berlin wools, toys, and nicknacks, amounting to $900 or more, and before any of it became due, made representations that she had been robbed, and told a melancholy but false tale, in order to get out of paying her debts. Her case is remanded in the mean time, but she will probably discover before she is out of the meshes, that there is a law which protects the creditor as well as the debtor.

Public opinion here upon the Red River trouble, is becoming very strong in the direction of armed force to quell the insurgents; and petitions to the Mayor for an immediate public meeting, are now being signed. The replies of the Premier in Ottawa, and of Mr. Monsell in the Imperial Parliament, to questionings as to what was being done, were of the very circumlocutory character, which is ill-calculated to satisfy the public either here or at home. The detention of commissioner Smith, the despoiling and the solitary imprisonment of Schultz, and the murder of Scott, are "under consideration," we are told. Let us hope that the result of so prolonged a consideration may result in some decisive action. Meantime, the incipient trade which had sprung up between the Settlement and the cities of Hamilton, Toronto and Montreal, is pretty effectually squelched: for the rebels have made common property of the cattle, goods and chattels of the Canadian resident traders, and these are either imprisoned, or told they may go home minus their goods, and pay their creditors as best they may! Surely these men have a strong claim for indemnity; and surely, moreover, the much vaunted *ægis* of British power can make itself felt even at Red River.

Railways.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

At the annual meeting of this Company in London, England, on the 17th February, explanation were given by the Chairman of the Board, respecting the new arrangements with American lines. We give the substance of his remarks as follows:—

You know the importance of the through traffic to this Company, but I will refer to a statement which will at once demonstrate its value. I have here a return for four years showing the division of the entire traffic receipts of the Company into though traffic and local traffic. In 1865 the entire traffic of our line amounted to $4,144,905, of which $2,046,659 was local, and $2,098,245 through traffic. In 1866 the local traffic diminished to $1,833,324, while the through traffic in that year was $2,074,186. In 1866 the local traffic again dropped to $1,777,196, and the through traffic increased to $2,416,953. In 1869—that is in the year ending 31st July, the local traffic was $1,892,098, against through traffic amounting to $2,553,079; making the total traffic of that year $4,445,097. So that, you see, the through traffic of this Company is largely in excess of the local traffic, roughly speaking the proportions being relatively two-thirds to one-third, and upon the through traffic depends the success of this Company in earning its revenue and meeting its engagements. While I am on this subject I will just remark that of course the value of the through traffic depends very much upon the rates received for its transport. I have in my hand a return bearing upon this question. This return shows that the average through fare per passenger per mile, from New York to Chicago, was in 1860, 2.467 cents, and in 1866, 2.875 cents, while in 1869 it was 2.456 cents. Therefore the figures are very nearly the same for 1869 as for 1860. The first-class freight rate per ton per mile in the half-year ending January 1860, was 3.14 cents, in July 1866, 4.58 cents; and in the half-year ending in July last 3.58 cents. So that, in point of fact, although the through traffic has so much increased, the through rates and fares have not diminished in 1869 to what they were in 1860, but had rather improved. This through traffic, which is of so much importance to our railway, is, as you are no doubt aware, carried by four great east and west lines between Chicago and New York, the through freight routes being styled the Blue line, which is our own, the Red line, the White line, and the Union Star line, and these lines are all eagerly competing for the business from Chicago to the seaboard, and *vice versa*. The Michigan Central is, as most gentlemen in this room know, one of the most stable and respectable railroads in the United States; and, therefore, we feel the great importance of maintaining its alliance, and the good opinion of all those who were connected with it. We determined to come to an arrangement for the working of the through traffic of the two lines as one for a period of two years. We thought that would give us the required experience with regard to the necessities of the case and with regard to the advantages to be obtained before we proceeded to the consideration of any more lasting or permanent arrangement between the two Companies. It would have this advantage likewise, that it would deal with the question of the through traffic only, and would leave our own executive to deal with that of the local traffic; while it would also leave the control of the working expenses and the management of the line in our own hands, and in the hands of our colleagues in Canada. We considered that the fairest thing would be to take the two last years' working of both lines, see what proportion the through traffic of Michigan Central, and the Great Western of Canada, bore to each other, and let that be the proportion in which for the next two years we should divide this traffic. Then came the question of the Detroit and Milwaukee line. It was agreed that the through traffic of the Detroit and Milwaukee line should be taken into the confederation likewise; but, inasmuch as it had participated for one year only in the transport of through traffic over the blue line, we took its proportion on the basis of one year. Now, so far as we can make out from the figures then before us—and this is, of course, subject to correction—that the Great Western would be entitled to 48½ per cent. out of every £100 of earnings, the Michigan Central 44½ per cent., and the Detroit and Milwaukee 7 per cent. The through mileage of the three lines is as follows:—Great Western, 229 miles; Michigan Central, 284; and Detroit and Milwaukee, 189. So that, you see, although we have a smaller mileage than the Michigan Central, we get 48½ per cent. out of every £100, and they get 44½ per cent.; and, considering that the Michigan Central is a most important line, we think that the arrangement we have made for a working for two years promises