

—The Economical Mutual Fire Insurance Company shows, in its report for 1888, an aggregate of \$4,330,000 at risk. Mercantile risks constitute forty-three per cent. of the whole; manufacturing risks nearly ten per cent.; while the remainder consists of isolated risks. The rates of assessment on premium notes are kept down to 12½ and 15 per cent. on isolated and mercantile risks respectively; and a cash reserve of \$45,000 has been accumulated in the course of nearly seventeen years' business, nearly \$6,000 of which is the result of the business of 1888. Of this sum \$34,000 is held in the shape of real estate and mortgages. And behind are additional assets of \$228,921 in the shape of premium notes, a showing which must encourage its policyholders and others to believe in the efficacy of mutual insurance prudently conducted. Mr. Hugo Kranz was re-elected president, and Mr. John Fennell vice-president. The manager, Mr. Wm. Oelschlager, was presented with an address expressing thanks for his services, accompanied by a gold watch and chain.

—The City Mutual Fire Insurance Company was established in 1886, in London, Ont., to take commercial risks on the cash-mutual plan. It had at risk at the close of 1887, \$797,000, having been in existence only some sixteen months; and its total assets were at that time \$38,332, having paid losses of \$5,667. At the close of 1888, its risks aggregated \$1,203,363 under some 1,160 policies, 627 on the cash, and 533 on the mutual, system. Its cash premiums amounted to \$19,843, and it paid losses of \$10,218, averaging about \$400 per loss. It has net assets increased to \$48,841, of which \$10,000 is in the shape of Government deposit and \$35,589 unpaid balance on premium notes, against which it owed \$314 unadjusted losses, \$4,680 re-insurance reserve, and \$6,000 to the bank, showing balance of assets over \$37,000. The expenses are low and the business looks promising, especially as the company is pursuing a business-like policy in the inspection of risks.

—The Regina Board of Trade held its annual meeting not long since, when the president, Mr. Bole, made a verbal report of the year's proceedings. The election of officers resulted as follows:—President, D. Mowat; vice-president, P. Lamont; secretary, R. J. Steel; treasurer, R. B. Ferguson. Those whose names follow are members of the council—J. A. MacCaul, J. W. Smith, M. MacNichol, J. Dawson, A. Martin, D. W. Bole, J. F. Mowat, C. H. Black, R. Paul, R. J. Tinning. The board of arbitrators is as under:—R. Sweet, J. Dawson, J. H. Smith, J. W. Smith, R. Paul, R. B. Ferguson, A. Martin, D. Mowat, J. A. MacCaul, A. Sheppard, E. McCarthy, C. H. Bayne.

—The life business of the British Empire Mutual for the year 1888 amounts to \$1,662,000, which is an increase over 1887 of more than half a million dollars. This is a very gratifying exhibit, and we suspect that the efforts of the active Superintendent of Agencies, Mr. Matson, has had much to do with the result.

—A Board of Trade for the town of Pictou has been organized with the following officers: Col. Snow, president; H. H. Hamilton, vice-president; E. M. Macdonald, secretary; G. R. Chisholm, treasurer. Messrs. D. C. Henderson, Dr. McKenzie, I. B. Hamblin, T. Tanner, R. P. Fraser, executive committee.

—A leading wholesale grocery merchant of Montreal, commenting on the aspects of trade during the past few weeks, says: "There is no great activity in the demand for goods. Men who can pay, and want to pay, for their goods, are only buying as their wants arise." Doubtless the same condition is apparent in other lines than groceries, and it is better so. No one should find fault because a retail dealer does not buy on speculation; and it is dangerous for a retailer to permit himself to be induced by special discounts, dating forward, or any other plea, to exceed the bounds which prudence has set to his purchases.

—The Winnipeg Board of Trade held a meeting last week, at which the principal business was the choice of officers for the current year. Mr. James Redmond was elected by acclamation to the presidency, Col. McMillan and Mr. F. W. Stobart, who were also nominated, having withdrawn. Col. McMillan and Messrs. J. F. Stobart and Wm. Hespeler are nominated for the vice-presidency. Messrs. C. N. Bell and W. J. Aikin have been elected secretary and treasurer respectively. Some fifty nominations are made for both the council and the board of arbitration.

THERE has been a movement among Hudson's Bay Co. shareholders to effect some change in the management. Mr. Eden Colville has retired from the Governorship on account of ill-health, and Sir Donald A. Smith is elected to succeed him, Lord Anson becoming Deputy Governor. Lord Anson has shown also that he is himself keenly alive to the present needs of the company. The *Canadian Gazette* says that both promotions are without regard to seniority, and are evidence of a desire to infuse vigor and freshness into the management.

—La Banque du Peuple has declared its 105th dividend at the rate of three per cent. for the half-year.

## Correspondence.

### WHEAT AND FLOUR DUTIES.

Editor THE MONETARY TIMES.

SIR,—It is obvious that the Government and the Legislature, both of which are strongly Protectionist, have not been convinced that any injustice has been done to the millers in the adjustment of the duties on wheat and flour, or this interest would not have been the only one to suffer neglect and injury."

The above is from your article of last week, on "Shall Protectionism further advance," the inference intended being that, in your opinion, the Government would, if convinced of the injustice mentioned, rectify it. If you should join one of the millers' delegations to Ottawa, you would be speedily cured of such faith in politicians.

The case of the millers, in so far as Customs duties are concerned, is this: The import duty on wheat coming into Canada—the raw material—is 15c. per bushel, or, on the quantity required to make a barrel of flour, 67½c. The import duty on flour—the manufactured article—is 50c. per barrel. The difference, 17½c. per barrel, is the measure of the protection given by our Canadian tariff to American millers against Canadian millers in competing for Canadian trade. If anyone can bring arguments to justify a continuance of that state of things, let us have them. I have never heard a justification attempted, though I and others have discussed the matter with members of the Government individually, and with the whole Cabinet in Council.

The putting of a higher rate of duty on the raw material than on the manufactured article was a blunder in the first place. It

was done during the pressure of the large amount of work involved in framing the Tariff of 1879, and not noticed until given to Parliament and the public. Why it was not immediately put right, and these duties brought into line with all the rest on the list, can be understood only by those who have learned, in one way or other, what tremendous forces expediency and procrastination are in any Government we have ever had in our country.

The question of the quantity of wheat required to make a barrel of flour, which you say is "the pivot on which the whole case of the Canadian millers turns" can be easily settled to satisfaction of anyone who wishes to enquire. No miller who conducts his business on business principles has to guess at what his yields are. He knows at regular periods, to the fraction of a pound, how much wheat he used to a barrel of flour, since the period of the previous yield-taking. The best Canadian mills have as good and as modern machinery as the best mills in Minneapolis or out of it, and are, on the average, kept in as good running order and as well worked. I know, from my own experience, that 4½ bushels is rather under than over the quantity of wheat required in these best mills to make a barrel of good flour. The yields-book of my firm's mill, in this city, is open to the inspection of anyone interested in settling this pivotal fact for himself.

The bran and shorts which you mention but add to the disabilities of the Canadian miller, as against the American miller. In this way: When we bring in enough American wheat to make 100 barrels of flour, the weight (450 bushels) is 27,000 pounds, on which we pay freight. The American miller who sends flour into Canada pays freight on only 19,600 lbs.—the difference, less waste in manufacturing, consisting of the bran, shorts, and screenings. But these same bran, shorts, and screenings are worth less here than on the other side of the line; so much less at times that Canadian millers not infrequently ship their offal to the United States, paying 20 per cent. duty to the American Customs for the privilege. The demand of the millers is not for "increased protection." They are asking that the Canadian Customs tariff should cease to give protection to American millers against Canadian millers.

The diabolical thing about the Government's treatment of the millers in the matter of the wheat and flour duties is, that though they cannot, and do not, even attempt to justify the present condition of affairs, they do nothing towards remedying it.

M. McLAUGHLIN.

Royal Dominion Mills,  
Toronto, Feb. 6th, 1889.

### SHALL PROTECTION FURTHER ADVANCE?

Editor THE MONETARY TIMES.

SIR,—Permit me to remark upon your article of last week under above title that I do not think you were quite fair to the millers. I would mention a few points:

(1) As to Canada always having a wheat surplus for export. Years 1875, 1883, and 1888 (crop years) were all deficient. In 1883 our (imports were) 1,846,000 bushels.

(2) As to Liverpool always regulating prices of wheat. How then did United States millers in four or five years find the Canadian so much better than in England that they paid over \$700,000 in duty to get Canadian prices?

(3) As to 4½ bushels of wheat being required for 1 barrel flour. Under the old burr-stone process, the quantity of wheat required was about 4 20-60 bush. Under roller process, most mills use over 4 30-60 bush. good wheat per barrel, frequently 5 bushels.

(4) As to causes for imports of flour for home consumption. Apart from the years when Canada had a deficient crop, it has happened, even in years of good crops, that Canada exported during the early part of the season more wheat and flour than it really had to spare, and towards the end of the season had to replace by imports from United States, subject to duty.

It seems clear that in all seasons or parts of seasons when United States wheat or flour finds a market in Canada so much better than in England as to permit of payment of duty 15c. on wheat, 50c. on flour, the prices in Canada must be, to the extent of these figures, better than export mar-