

The Canadian Mint. Mr. A. H. W. Cleeve, of the Royal Mint, has arrived here to superintend the installation of machinery in the new Ottawa Mint. As a money factory, no doubt, the Canadian Mint will be altogether satisfactory its most serious problem will be like that of some other factories, enjoying public assistance—what to do with the output? The demand for Canadian silver and copper coinage has its limits and it is difficult to see where the demand for Canadian gold coin will have its beginning.

Insurance Congress. The International Insurance Congress is now sitting at Berlin, over three hundred members being present, and the Hall of the Reichstag having been placed at the disposal of the Congress. One of the most interesting features of the gathering is the presence of one delegate from Japan, Mr. Hashimoto, manager of the Nippon Insurance Company. Mr. Hashimoto while expressing regret that Japan could not at present contribute much light to the Congress, also expressed the hope to see it sitting some day at Tokio. There are not many subjects to which an intelligent Jap cannot bring new light, because he sees everything from a different point of view to that of the European. The Congress might do worse than to meet at Tokio a few years hence.

Japan and Insurance. Life insurance must have novel features in a country in which every man seems to regard his own life as one of the least valuable of his assets; and the architectural conditions of Japan cannot be very favourable to the development of the fire insurance business.

EARTHQUAKE CLAUSES, USED IN CHILI BY THE ALLIANCE & SUN OF LONDON.

The Chilian clauses used in the policies of the Alliance and Sun of London, are much stronger than those usually adopted. They read as follows:

ALLIANCE.—The company will not be liable for any loss arising from fire occasioned by invasion, civil or foreign war, rebellion or riots, or by superior military or usurping force, nor from fire caused by earthquakes, hurricanes, or volcanic eruptions, and the assured, if the company shall so require, shall show that the loss or disaster was not occasioned by any of these excepted causes, and in the event of his not fulfilling such formality he shall not be compensated for the loss or disaster.

SUN FIRE.—This policy does not cover loss or damage by fire occasioned by or happening through or during the existence of any earthquake, hurricane, or volcanic eruption unless proof be

made to the satisfaction of the company that such loss or damage was not occasioned by or through, or connected with, but occurred from a cause or causes independent of any such contingency.

It will be seen that the burden of proof rests upon the assured. It is, however, believed that the Chilian courts will side with the assured as far as possible. Much litigation will, it is expected, take place.

WHAT FIRE INSURANCE IS FOR.

It would be a capital thing for a good many people, to take a few primary lessons on the subject of fire insurance. They would speedily come to a knowledge of the important fact that the mission of fire underwriters is to sell indemnity, in case of fire loss, on property *as they find it*. It is no part of the business of fire insurance, strictly speaking, to concern itself about improved fire-extinguishing appliances, fire-proof buildings, nor hazardous contents. Its business is to fix a price at which the risk can be assumed. The combustible or non-combustible character of the property, its exposure from outside causes, and the probability or otherwise of efficient fire department protection, are questions for the owner to settle. If the majority of the property-holders in a town or city consult their own best interests, they will, of course, reduce the fire hazard to a minimum by erecting good buildings, prudential arrangements generally, and by making provision for ready extinguishment of fires when they do occur. In such a town or city the fire insurance companies sell indemnity at a comparatively low rate simply because the risk is comparatively little. All properly conducted fire underwriting takes the experiences of the past in a wide field and for a long period of time, and classifies the various risks according to their burning propensities, and then fixes the cost, approximately, on the basis of this past experience, always taking into account the existing facilities for fire extinguishment. For precisely the same reason that a railway company charges more for hauling twenty than it does for hauling ten tons of freight a given distance, a fire insurance company charges, or ought to charge, more for a heavy risk than for a light one.

The people who, with an air of wisdom, assume to criticize the fire underwriters *after a fire* because they took the risk burned, and who charge them with a lack of discrimination in accepting risks generally, make a sorry exhibition either of their ignorance or their insincerity. What the property owner wants, and what the companies are formed for, is insurance against loss liability, and the worse the risk the more the insurance is needed. The taking of a bad risk is just as much a legitimate part of the functions of fire underwriting as the taking of a good risk. The question of the