

Mr. Robert McLean, Secretary of the C. P. U. A., has returned from his furlough, hale and hearty for his years. He had every reason to feel gratified at the many greetings and the tone of his welcoming home by the insurance fraternity. Mr. McLean always takes his summer holidays in the early spring, goes South to get the summer into them. Then he returns here, and so catches our summer again. Thus he has two summers, Scotchmen may be trusted to get the best value for their output every time.

I have heard that it is the intention of the chief Management, at an early date, to remove the head office of the Mercantile Fire Insurance Company from Waterloo to Toronto. You will remember that the London & Lancashire now guarantee all the undertakings of the Mercantile, and it is considered proper and fit that this Company should come down, and have its seat amongst the other head offices in Toronto. Its Agency field is being extended, and other signs of vigor are not wanting, so that the Mercantile may be expected to make good progress and become more worthy of its distinguished proprietary. Our old friend, Manager Lockie, is working for a record a point or two higher than he has now attained to (good luck to him!), being now better equipped to enter the field and go where the fray is keenest. Location in this city will in all respects be more convenient for him. The times do change! The writer looks back to certain days, now several years ago, when P. H. Sims, now Manager of the British America, was Secretary, and Lockie was Inspector, of the Mercantile; and Jerry Hughes, now of the Aetna Fire, was, I think, Inspector of the Waterloo Fire, and a Director and something else, all in one. In winter days when business was slack, as it often was, these three worthies would gather round a big box stove (burning three sticks of cord wood, whole lengths, at a time), in the Mercantile office, which was upstairs (in Waterloo, too!), and listen to the insurance and other news from the outer world as detailed by some Inspector or travelling man. There was an exchange of views on general business politics, and so on. There were none of the trammels of official life there—just good fellowship of the old sort. You could light your pipe or cigar with the rest of them, and enjoy your smoke, and the small box of sawdust by the stove for a cuspador. Those were not hurrying days. There were no electric lights, no telephones, no sidewalk all the way to Berlin as at present. Good's Plans were new things, and the Mercantile and Waterloo, when they had a good year, would buy one, for Mutual use, when not too high in price, which they sometimes were. Of course they subscribed for, and both advertised in the *Insurance Society*, which was the colored ancestor of the now fair and up-to-date CHRONICLE. What one company did the other did. They were close friends then. Alas now, there is "a rift within the lute," and they do say it is a wide one. Coming back to my thread, I must say they all made up a jolly coterie. Lockie was the most sedate of the lot apparently. Now all is changed, and Sims is one of the busiest of men in Toronto, in his sphere, the B. A. Jerry Hughes wears fine cloths, and is all over the country like spring, with frequent runs to Hartford, Conn. Lockie, with the Mercantile, is coming to Toronto. Surely Waterloo will miss these sons of hers, who have done her honor in their careers. However, as Jerry says, Seagram is *not* there, and will help to keep up a proper *fun*. Well, we cannot be young for ever. I must now close; I feel quite melancholy over this reminiscent business.

Yours,

ARIEL.

TORONTO, May 12, 1896.

Notes and Items.

The Auburn Woollen Mills, Peterboro, Ont., were burnt on 14th inst. The total loss is estimated at \$100,000. The following companies are interested: Royal, \$7,500; Atlas, \$4,000; Manchester, \$5,000; London Assurance, \$4,500; Aetna, Sun, Alliance, British America, Western, Caledonian, Northern, Guardian, Lancashire, Phenix of Brooklyn, each \$2,500; Queen, \$2,000; Norwich Union, \$1,500; Waterloo Mutual, \$3,000.

The Caledonian Insurance Company, of which Mr. C. R. G. Johnson has been recently appointed chief agent for Montreal and District, will occupy an office in the Canada Life Building, which promises to be an insurance centre.

The adjustment of losses by fire at Aland's brewery, Halifax, resulted in the total being fixed at \$27,576, on \$95,000 of insurance. The building carried \$45,000, on which the loss was adjudged to be \$5,649; it was over-insured.

Cripple Creek, a town built wholly of wood, having been consumed by fire at a loss of about three millions, the inhabitants have decided to re-build with brick and stone, also to have a paid fire department. It takes a pile of money to teach some people prudence.

The Merchants' Life is the name of a new company in Ontario, which is reported to be designed of the composite order, with the assessment feature prominent. The founders are inexperienced, so they have an interesting career before them as learners in the school of experience.

H. H. Holmes whose murders committed to defraud insurance companies give him horrible pre eminence as a combination of fiend and human being, was hanged at Philadelphia on the 7th inst. A worse villain never swung. What deepens his guilt is that he was educated as a physician.

The Auffmordt Company's claim for \$294,000 for loss from smoke damage has been arranged by an agreement fixing the damage at 10 per cent., on the sound value of the principal amount of the stock which was a million dollars, and 17½ per cent. on \$80,000 for goods damaged by water.

North Dakota fire insurance business had a fine record last year, the premiums received were \$440,074, losses incurred \$186,061, ratio of losses 42.30 per cent. The British America and Western escaped with only \$652 losses to \$10,540 premiums, and most of the British companies came out with a very small percentage of losses.

The total premiums received by life assurance companies in Great Britain in 1895 amounted to \$88,188,000, and expenses of management to \$12,923,000, an average ratio of 14.75 per cent. Some of the home companies keep their expense ratio below 10 per cent. The average of a group of the largest is a fraction over 10 per cent.

The Handy Guide, published by the Spectator Company, New York, gives the premium rates, applications, and policies of the leading American and Canadian life insurance companies, with all details and data requisite for a complete knowledge of their business conditions and methods. The Spectator is thanked for a copy of above.

The American Miller gives the number of flour mill fires in Canada for 1895 as 29, and total losses \$139,945, with insurance of \$46,400. This is a better record than 1894 with its losses of \$182,769. Out of 135 cases in which the cause of the fire is stated, only one is of a nature special to a flour mill, that is, explosion of mill dust, all the other fires were from causes which might create a fire in any building where machinery is in operation, such as hot boxes, defective chimney, stove pipe, lamp explosions, etc. "A dirty, poorly cared-for mill is a dangerous risk," says the *Miller*, so is a dirty, ill-cared for factory or workshop, or dwelling house.