

casualty affecting the working classes takes place, the local press informs us that the agents of the Prudential, the Refuge, the British Workman, and other industrial institutions, put in an appearance within a few hours, and begin at once to arrange for the payment of the claims as soon as the requisite proofs can be got together. Our common-sense workingmen will contrast this promptitude with the delay which must inevitably take place if the money has to be raised by the collection of small instalments from a large number of persons." Here, says the *Monitor*, is the thing in a nutshell. The difference between industrial and assessment insurance is just the difference between ready cash and passing the hat!

The annual meeting of the policy-holders of the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company was held at Portland, Me., on January 25th. The annual statement showed a gain in assets, surplus, premium income, new policies issued, number of policies, and amount of insurance in force. Though the market value of securities generally had fallen off the past few months, yet as an evidence of the careful selection of the same, the statement exhibits the handsome gain of \$28,388.33 in the market value of its investments over that of a year ago. The mortality record for 1886 is remarkably favorable, the actual losses being about \$90,000 less than the table rates of probable losses.

A correspondent writing to the *Chicago Tribune* on the subject of "What may lead to fires," says: "It is stated by scientists, and generally regarded as a fact by insurance men, that neither petroleum or any of its products can cause spontaneous combustion. The chemical changes in oils and oily substances in virtue of which sufficient oxygen is absorbed from the air to cause them to burn is peculiar to vegetable and animal oils, principally the former. But as yet no mineral oil has been discovered that would set itself or substances in contact with it afire, so far as can be learned. Benzine and other light products of petroleum are dangerous, but in a different way than is popularly supposed. Evaporating at a low temperature, they mix with the air and form a heavy vapor, which in a cold room will lie undetected near the floor. One man may enter the room in safety with a light held some distance from the floor. The next corner may set his lantern on the floor and cause an explosion. The same result may be produced by a mouse gnawing a match. But it is unjust to members of the petroleum family to accuse them of producing spontaneous ignition, however bad their character. Many mysterious fires are undoubtedly due to spontaneous combustion, and the watchman cannot be too vigilant in looking for oily waste or rags. But let us temper vigilance with discrimination and not get in the habit of charging all doubtful blazes to this fashionable account. Let us beware of leaks in receptacles for benzine, gasoline and even kerosene. Let us keep matches off the floor and exterminate mice. And let us keep steam pipes clear of the wood-work in our buildings. The absorption of oxygen by charred wood is a frequent though much questioned cause of fire in steam-heated buildings.

At Pittsburg, Pa., a meeting to arrange a mutual fire insurance plan for the National Association of Wholesale and Retail Druggists has been in session. The drug business of America, says the *N. Y. Commercial Bulletin*, carries an aggregate annual insurance of \$25,000,000 upon which they pay a very high rate owing to the danger of fire from explosive

acids, &c., handled by the trade. It is proposed to formulate some plan whereby the immense amounts paid out annually to insurance companies can be kept in their own trade. This will be entirely satisfactory to the insurance companies, beyond question; for it will convince these druggists that insuring their business doesn't pay the underwriters—and has not for many years past—and they will be perfectly willing to let this special class of hazards take care of itself.

As the holder by assignment of 70 policies of insurance issued by the Charter Oak Life Insurance Company, of Hartford, Conn., prior to Sept. 23, 1886, when the company became insolvent, George S. Studwell has brought an action to recover \$81,371.18, their estimated aggregate value. On the application of Studwell's attorneys, the judge granted an attachment against the assets of the insolvent company in N.Y. State.

Among the fire insurance companies of the world the Phenix of Brooklyn is classed very high by the *Investigator*. No other company, it says, is watched by its competitors with such intense interest. No other company in the history of the business has grown great so rapidly and built up such an immense business in so short a time. One is quite prepared to credit such a sweeping assertion when our attention is drawn to the business of a single year. At the close of 1877—ten years ago—the Phenix had assets amounting to \$2,710,721, and its entire premium income for that year amounted to only \$1,653,217. The year just closed finds it with assets of \$5,383,172, and its premium receipts for the year 1886, were \$5,553,876—the largest of any company in the country. Itemized, the figures stand as follows: Admitted assets, \$5,383,172. Liabilities: Re-insurance reserve \$3,466,887—an increase over the year preceding of \$621,439; outstanding losses, \$353,760; total liabilities, \$3,820,647; gross surplus \$1,557,087. Income: Fire premiums \$4,185,864; marine and inland premiums \$1,368,012; interest \$133,531; total income \$5,750,999. Disbursements: Fire losses \$2,082,493; marine and inland losses, \$1,459,809; dividends \$100,000; all other expenditures \$760,205; total expenditure \$4,402,507.

THE BIG IRON CASE.

Chief Justice Cameron has given judgment in the suit of Bertram v. Massey. The plaintiffs recover upwards of \$5,000 against the defendants, the action being dismissed against Mr. A. H. Massey, who was made a party only for technical purposes. The defendants succeeded to the extent of \$200 on their counter claim. We regret that lack of space compels us to hold over till next week a full statement of the case, involving as it does many points of commercial law which will have much interest for the mercantile community.

GORE DISTRICT MUTUAL FIRE INS. CO.—In the report of this company one year ago the opinion was expressed that it was of the highest importance to the future success and prosperity of the "Gore" that it should have a permanent rest, "and for this purpose the cash surplus over all liabilities should be allowed to increase to the sum of \$100,000." To accomplish this end the company has made rapid progress during the past year. It has increased its deposit with the Provincial Treasurer from \$7,000 to \$20,000 and added \$13,535 to the amount of its mortgages, which now reach the sum of \$49,425, while cash in office and banks exceeds \$26,000. From these

figures it may be seen that the company has already nearly reached the desired sum.—But this large expansion of assets is not the only feature of the year's business. The amount at risk has increased nearly \$400,000, income a little over \$10,500 and the total assets of \$238,290 available for the payment of losses are to-day increased in round numbers nearly \$20,000. While these figures are pleasant to look at there are others on the opposite side of the account that must necessarily be less so. There we learn that the "Gore" seems to have had its full share of fires. During the year the sum of \$52,944 was disbursed for losses. Still this is a matter that need not have caused the management much worry. Doubtless it did not.

—Although the directors of the Midland Loan and Savings' Company were, to some extent, handicapped by the low rates of interest obtainable for high class securities and the fact that the mortgages bearing the higher rates of previous years are being rapidly paid off, they make a very creditable showing for 1886. In addition to maintaining the usual dividend of seven per cent., reserve fund has been augmented by \$4,000 and contingent account \$2,446, making the sum at the credit of each \$39,000 and \$6,288 respectively. Upwards of \$500,000 had been received on deposit up to the end of the year, which fact, together with the continued demand for the company's funds, warranted the directors in passing a by-law to increase the capital stock by \$100,000. The assets are set down at \$851,342 which is \$304,208 in excess of liabilities.

Meetings.

CANADA PERMANENT LOAN AND SAVINGS' COMPANY.

The thirty-second annual meeting of shareholders in this company was held in the company's offices, Toronto street, Toronto, on Wednesday the 9th instant, the president, E. Hooper, Esq., in the chair.

Mr. J. Herbert Mason, the managing director, read the

REPORT.

The directors have very much satisfaction in presenting to the stockholders their report of the business of the company for the year 1886 and the duly audited annual statement.

It was intimated in the preceding report that the limit of borrowing power on the existing stock capital had been reached. As the demand for loans continued and could not be met without additional money, the board decided to offer to the shareholders, *pro rata*, a half million dollars of new stock, upon which twenty per cent. has been called up and paid. No premium, beyond a proportionate contribution to the reserve fund, was charged the shareholders, but the shares not taken were disposed of at a profit of \$3,072. This issue enlarges the subscribed capital to \$3,500,000, and the paid-up capital to \$2,300,000. With these increased funds, and those which they were thus empowered to accept for investment, the directors have been enabled to supply all approved applications for loans.

The cash receipts for the year reached the unprecedentedly large sum of three millions one hundred thousand dollars. Of this amount there were received from investors here and in Great Britain \$1,167,079, and on account of mortgage loans and other securities \$1,751,868. The amount invested during the year was \$1,554,325.

The total assets of the company exhibit an increase of \$528,054 over last year, and now amount to \$9,301,615, of which \$8,802,484 consists of mortgages on real estate.

Out of the net earnings the board was able to declare the usual half-yearly dividends of six per cent. each on the paid-up stock, as well as to pay the income tax thereon levied by the city of Toronto, amounting to \$4,345, and also to add a further sum of thirty thou-