

destroy more than (\$150,000,000) a hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of property in the United States. These diagrams are based upon statistics published in the *Chronicle* fire tables and exhibit, with approximate accuracy, the proportion of fires to causes commonly called inherent.

In preparing these object lessons no attention has been paid to exposure fires, nor to incendiary fires, nor to fires of "unknown" or "not reported" origins.

The diagrams from which we quoted Mr. Webster's preface tells us, are based on statistics prepared for the *Chronicle* fire tables. In the more common risks, tens of thousands of fire reports have been examined. In most instances hundreds or thousands of fires furnish a basis for the diagrams. In a very few cases (in class of risks in which fires are infrequent) the number of fires examined has been less than one hundred.

#### CHANGES IN RETAIL BUSINESS.

The changing character of retail trade, especially in the cities, is one of the puzzles of the present decade. Under the heading, "The Return of the Retail," the *Dry Goods Economist* of New York shows the changes which are continually taking place in the business locations. Up to about three years ago, says that journal, the development of new retail business centres in New York was in a single direction—up-town. Within these three years, however, there has been a marked development in another quarter. "The exodus from downtown and from such old centres of business as Fulton and Cortlandt streets and the lower parts of Broadway has ceased, and, instead of retail business decreasing down-town, a number of stores devoted to the sale of boots and shoes, men's furnishings, hats, clothing, drugs, books, etc., have been established recently in the lower section of the city, which have all the appearances of very successful business ventures."

The reason of this change, our contemporary considers, is to be found in the growth of the enormous modern sky-scraping office buildings. Some of these buildings contain during the business hours of the day a population equal to that of a fair-sized country town, and it is to the armies of business men and women that spend their days therein that the downtown retailer caters. Many of these people live out of town and reach and leave the city by means of the ferries in the neighborhood of their office, so that they seldom visit the uptown stores, but do their shopping in the intervals of business.

#### MANUFACTURERS' DOINGS.

The old and foolish Black Country custom of advancing money to work-people on account of work remaining to be done, in other words, of pawning future wages, has just received a severe but logical condemnation from Mr. Neville, the stipendiary magistrate for South Staffordshire. The custom is a survival of the old semi-feudal hiring system, and until recently it has been claimed that an advance on account of unearned wages constituted a bond of service until the money advanced was paid. Mr. Neville, in condemning the system, only followed out the line of action adopted many years ago by Mr. Stipendiary Isaac Spooner, one of the ablest and most experienced magistrates.

Some months ago a sample shipment of safes was sent to Hong Kong by the Toronto safe-makers, J. & J. Taylor. We now learn

that as a result of this the firm named received quite an order for their goods, the first shipment of which goes forward this week. Not only this, but an order has been filled by them for a firm in Canton. It is gratifying to hear of Canadian manufactures going to foreign markets, and from the established reputation of the Messrs. Taylor there is reason to expect that their products will give a good account of themselves.

A neat piece of work is the catalogue of 40 pages got up by J. Hough for the Canadian Office and School Furniture Co., of Preston, of which Mr. E. R. C. Clarkson is president and Mr. W. Stahlachmidt, manager. The variety of goods put out by this company is considerable, from the letter file or rotary case to the bank counter or the church prie-dieu. They make school desks and commercial college desks, as well as office desks from the plainest and simplest flat top to the most elaborate improved rotary, in Queen Anne style, with shelves, racks, drawers and boxes. Their library desks are in great variety. We also observe a very neat pattern of secretary bookcase, and an inviting desk in walnut, entitled "The Office King." This concern certainly turns out handsome goods.

The Dominion Paper Company may possibly build in Sherbrooke, Que. It will be remembered that a disastrous fire at Kingsley Falls destroyed their mill, and has rendered it necessary for them to erect a new one.

The Imperial Oil Company are making arrangements to supply merchants at Brandon, Man., with oil in bulk. Previously their oils have been handled through an agency; the company will now establish a branch warehouse in Brandon.

One hundred and six tons of iron was smelted at the Ferrona furnace one day last week, which is said to be the biggest smelting ever done in one day at that rising Nova Scotia village.

A St. John exchange tells of the various engagements in the lower provinces of a representative of the Dominion Bridge Co. Mr. W. E. Brown is at work at Pugwash with some bridge builders on a new bridge, 700 feet long, for the Nova Scotia local government. The same company has contracts to put up 25 spans for the Dominion Coal Company, at Louisburg, C.B.; one span at Grand River, Richmond county, C.B.; one at Stoney Brook, Inverness county, C.B.; one at Country Harbor, Guysboro county, N.S. (the last three for the N. S. Government), and two for the Western Counties Railway. All these are to be steel spans.

The Drummond Colliery at Westville, N.S., has some inquiries for coal from Ontario on account of the miners' strike in the United States. This market is, however, uncertain until better freighting arrangements are perfected, and the present demand being but temporary, sufficient encouragement is not afforded for a large outlay.—*Enterprise*, 26th.

The narrowness and prejudice which sometimes drives mechanics to absurd lengths received illustration on Saturday last, at Southampton, Ont. In that village is a large tannery, controlled and managed by the firm of Bowman & Zinkan. There are about 70 hands employed. The account states that when the bookkeeper arrived at the tannery on Saturday morning, he found the engines at a standstill and no fires kindled, while the men were standing in groups discussing the situation. About 25 of the men, who were of the P. P. A. persuasion, declared that they would not work unless Mr. McDermott, who

is a Roman Catholic and foreman of the tannery, was dismissed by the firm. The sole reason why they wanted McDermott dismissed was, they said, because he was a Roman Catholic. Information of this state of affairs was carried to Mr. C. M. Bowman, who is a partner in the firm, and to him the men repeated their demand for the dismissal of McDermott. But Mr. Bowman refused to yield to it, and told the men that McDermott was a capable and just man, and rather than submit to their demands he would prefer to see the tannery closed. Before noon the tannery was again at work; but Mr. Bowman, in view of the action of the 25 men, dismissed five of their leaders for bringing in religious discord where it should never find a place. The press telegram states the proceeding was dictated by the lodge, which met on the previous night.

#### FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

A telegram from St. Louis, Mo., says that, beginning with Monday last, all the flouring mills in that city and vicinity but five will cease work for want of coal. These five have supplies of wood that will last from four to ten days.

The demand for Canadian and American mutton has strengthened in British markets. In consequence the shipments of sheep from Montreal show a large increase over those of a year ago. Up to May 19th, 3,104 head had been sent forward, as compared with 101 head last year, during a similar period. The bulk of the sheep come from the Western States, and are being shipped through Canada in bond.

A communication, received from St. Catharines, says that Government agents are buying there small quantities of tea, coffee, spices, etc., and are making tests in conformity with the food adulteration Act.

In British Columbia the salmon canneries undergoing improvements, and those in course of erection, are now nearing completion. The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company have their new cannery at Steveston almost ready for action. It has a capacity of 35,000 cases. The entire plant of the Bon Accord cannery is being removed by the steamer "Telephone" to Messrs. D. J. Munn & Co.'s new Sea Island cannery, which will be ready for business within a few weeks.

Eleme raisins are, according to some accounts, taking the place of Valencias in the English market. Elemes sell there at 21s. to 26s., while Valencias are quoted at from 22s. for common off-stalk up to 31s. to 36s. for layers.

For some weeks large quantities of potatoes have been exported to the United States from Annapolis and Cornwallis valleys in Nova Scotia. Shipments are made by the Bay of Fundy Steamship Company from Annapolis for connection at St. John with the International Steamship Company to Boston.

The capacity of the Grenville flour mills at Ayr, Ont., is to be raised from 400 to 700 barrels daily.

Our Montreal correspondent writes that the sugar refiners in that city have given notice that after June 15th sugars will be sold at fourteen days' net prices, and the 2½ per cent. discount will be discontinued.

Cheese export from Montreal is lively. The shipments from that port, last week were 34,220 boxes, and the shipments this season up to 26th May amounted to 60,896 boxes, as compared with 17,700 boxes to same date last year.