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A Chicago Suit against Fire Companies.

Chicago charging them with conspiracy in restraint of trade and to advance prices. There are 104 companies involved in this wholesale suit. The law officer of the State has announced his intention to begin suits in other districts than Chicago, so that if they are pursued he and the courts will have a plethora of business shortly. There are 25 companies included in the suits that are in operation in Canada. The indictment sets forth that the companies specified are the only ones doing fire insurance business in Chicago, that consequently they have absolute power to fix rates and have made such arrangements as shut off competition. The agents are not much disturbed over this proceeding as they do not consider themselves to have infringed any law in force in the State of Illinois, that State's anti-trust law having been pronounced unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. Some managers talk of their companies withdrawing from Chicago should the suit lead to interference with their business, but others regard such a step as impracticable and needless. As Chicago is now in need of larger insurance accommodation any threatened restriction of what already exists would rouse such opposition as would compel the State authorities to withdraw the suits. The movement is believed to have been instigated by certain packers whose policies have been recently cancelled since the Armour fire. The business of fire insurance is as open to any company to transact as selling dry goods.

Any attempt at monopoly can be broken by those who have enterprise enough to enter the business and credit enough to secure it. The companies by

fixing a common schedule of rates are simply endeavouring to protect themselves from such losses as, if continued, would necessitate withdrawal from so disastrous a field. If Chicago desires its insurance companies to continue in business there the citizens will have to pay such rates as yield a fair profit.

Newfoundland's position.

If Newfoundland is ever to be brought into Confederation it will not be effected without public opinion in the Island and in the Dominion being aroused in favour of union. How the Island stands financially and what was the prospect of a movement for Confederation were briefly dwelt upon by Judge Morrison at the Board of Trade dinner at Toronto. As he spoke with authority his words are worthy of record; they make a pregnant text for those who desire to advocate union.

"First of these was the debt of the island colony, which now totalled \$20,000,000, of which \$13,000,000 or \$14,000,000 had been incurred in building over 600 miles of railway, and the rest in the erection of public works. This debt would have to be taken over by Canada. The population of Newfoundland was 218,000, its revenue \$2,000,000, its imports \$8,000,000 and exports about the same. The imports were largely from the United Kingdom, the United States, the West Indies and Canada, about one-third being from the latter. In the event of confederation Canada would soon, he believed, have the whole of this trade. The island had great resources, and he briefly enumerated them: Cod and herring fishing, and whaling, timber and minerals. It was also thought that in the near future rich coal deposits would be found. Everywhere prosperity reigned; the same was true of Canada, and he