

matter of notoriety and of universal acknowledgment, by all classes of citizens. Apart from the discomfort and dangers incident to roads and pathways out of repair, there is the question of expense they cause to owners of vehicles, owing to damaged wheels, etc. Were a census for one year compiled of such damages to vehicles, and of the outlay to meet the claims of persons injured by defective sidewalks, the result would prove now wasteful is the so-called economy of keeping roads and paths in bad condition. This is one of, if not the most important, question now before our citizens; we cannot drive, or walk on any street without having this matter forced on our attention—often most disagreeably.

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The reputation of having the worst roads and sidewalks of any city of equal rank in the world, is injurious to the interests of Montreal. The new Mayor and Council will, we trust, deal with this question vigorously, and decide and enter upon a systematic plan for raising the roads and sidewalks of this magnificent city up to the standard of modern times, and so relieve the citizen from a reproach which visitors regard as a reflection upon our intelligence, our enterprise and our self-respect.

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The ballot-box scandal in Toronto is to be the subject of a judicial enquiry before the County Judge. Evidence has been produced in the Police Court, that in one ballot-box there were found twenty-five ballots that were "stuffed" in after the poll was closed, or before it opened, the marks on which are proved to have been made by one person. The poll-clerk is in custody. It begins to look as though the election would be declared void, and a new one ordered, as the evidence already in hand points to there having been a systematic stuffing of ballot-boxes with bogus votes. It is high time an example were made of some criminal for tampering with a ballot-box. The offence carries a heavy penalty, but the law has lost its restraining influence owing to the crime being winked at.

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The City Fire Department reports 97 fires last month, against thirty-two in January, 1903. Over one half the causes of fire are given as follows: chimneys, twenty-five; over-heated furnaces, stoves and stove pipes, twenty-four, which proves the truth of our remarks respecting the hazard from carelessly built chimneys and recklessly placed and ill managed heating apparatus. Lamps and coal oil stoves, together, caused twelve fires; electricity and children with matches, are each charged with six fires; thawing water pipes caused ten fires, which is somewhat curious, as, the effort to get a supply of water brought a fire. There were forty-four alarms, and "no fire," and twenty-one "false alarms" in January, indicating gross misuse of the signal boxes.

The situation in the East presents an exasperating problem, the news being so contradictory and the factors to be considered so varied in value and relevancy. Two features which appear to be clear, are of the greatest importance. The British Government, according to the King's Speech and the statement of Lord Lansdowne, and the French Government, according to a reported deliverance by the President, are each anxiously endeavouring by their good offices to avert war. As we have previously pointed out, France is deeply interested in the preservation of peace, as a war between Japan and Russia would threaten a serious disturbance of her interests in the East. War in that region of the world would be like a conflagration, it might spread so as to involve several other powers who are most anxious not to become involved. The conflict could hardly fail to be extremely sanguinary, and a revolting reproach to modern civilization.

## Notes and Items.

### At Home and Abroad.

SIR NEVILLE LUBBOCK, K.C.M.G., has been elected governor of the Royal Exchange Insurance Corporation.

THE CANADA LIFE ASSURANCE Co.'s annual meeting will be held at Toronto, on 24th inst.

THE MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE Co., of Canada, will hold its thirtieth annual meeting at Waterloo, Ont., on 3rd March next.

OTTAWA CLEARING HOUSE.—Total for week ending 28th January, 1904—Clearings, \$1,502,352; corresponding week last year, \$1,618,736.

A SUCCESSFUL CANADIAN.—Mr. Robt. Henderson, who, a short time ago, was appointed one of the actuaries of the Equitable, of New York, is a Canadian by birth, and received his education in Canada. He holds a degree from the University of Toronto, and is member of the Actuarial Society of America.

NO THEATRE SCARE IN CANADA.—A New York journal speaks of "the large reduction in theatre attendance caused by a fear of a repetition of the Chicago holocaust." In this city, the attendance at the theatres is reported to have been quite up to the average, and above it in some places, yet several places of amusement in this city are seriously in need of better facilities for the quick exit of audiences.

MIND YOUR STOPS.—An amusing illustration of how the sense of a narrative may be altered by defective punctuation and sentences being put without order, appears in the "St. Louis Republic":—The home of Ashley Cabell, in Woodlawn, caught fire Sunday morning about eleven o'clock, but the flames were extinguished before much damage was done by the volunteer fire department." The passage should have read, "the flames were extinguished by the Volunteer Fire Department, etc."