

THE FARM BUSINESS OF THE FIRE COMPANIES.

To the Editor of The Chronicle:

Sir—I note with pleasure the letter of "Agent" in your issue of June 23rd dealing with the farm business of the fire companies, and at the risk of appearing to criticise the policies and methods of the heads of the fire companies I wish to support his statements as another agent of long standing for some of the largest and best companies in the business.

Your correspondent's first criticism is to my mind the root of the whole trouble. Every down and out, failure or jobless no good, retired farmer or second class lawyer and even notorious unrelies seem to be possible agents for many of the companies, regardless of their position in the insurance world. Inspectors for both new and old companies in the field are everlastingly attempting to increase their business through new agencies. As most experienced and informed agents have all the companies they can handle, agencies are placed with men similar to the above regardless of their lack of ordinary knowledge of the business or of their ability to properly estimate a risk either morally or physically, in the hope that a few three-year risks will result from friends—such parties never have risks where knowledge of rates or schedules is required. In almost any town in Ontario there will be found many more agents than the business warrants, and in most cases the surplus agents have practically no ability to protect their company.

In the face of this the companies wonder at increasing farm losses and talk about penalizing, by raising rates, good agencies for the mistakes of Head Offices. Such a course will only drive the small percentage of good farm business now held by the Board companies to the Mutuals, who, without the large reserves of the regular companies, make money at lower rates, pay their losses and in many cases have done so for long terms of years. Their risks are properly inspected and placed by men, usually, who understand their business. The results are profitable to all concerned. I state this quite impartially as in my agency, I do not represent a Mutual Company.

The over-insurance mentioned by your correspondent is due not at all to the elimination of the two-thirds clause and the limits on live stock, but by agents who are not insurance men trying to make too much money out of individual risks. Insurance is in many cases only a side line with them and they do not figure on any regular income from their insurance business. Good farm business should not be subject to a two-thirds clause and good farmers handling good stock cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by putting limits on live stock, particularly in these days of high and constantly increasing values.

The remedies suggested are:—

First—The elimination of that ancient nuisance and evident danger, "The part-time agent."

Second—The same care exercised in appointing agents as the companies exercise in appointing inspectors and managers.

The income of the companies might fall off a little, but it is certain that any such decline would be more than offset by the decline in losses.

Yours truly,

June 29th, 1916. ANOTHER AGENT.

CANADIAN FIRE RECORD

Specially compiled by The Chronicle.

FIRE AT ST. JOHN, N.B.

On the 3rd inst. a fire occurred on the premises of the Esterbrook Tea Company, St. John, N.B. Insurance as follows:—On stock, Employers, \$3,500; General of Perth, \$6,000; Phoenix of London, \$6,500; Quebec, \$6,500; Globe Underwriters, \$5,000; Connecticut, \$5,000; Atlas, \$5,000; New York Underwriters, \$5,000; Home, \$5,000; Phoenix of Hartford, \$5,000; Springfield, \$5,000; total, \$57,500. Loss total.

FIRE AT ST. EVARISTE, BEAUCE, P.Q.

By the fire which occurred on the 3rd inst. at the village of St. Evariste, Beauce, P.Q., the following companies are interested:—Liverpool & London & Globe, \$1,300; Norwich Union, \$1,000; Northern, \$800; Guardian, \$3,200; Phoenix of London, \$500; Mount Royal, \$750; British Colonial, \$1,500; total, \$9,050. Total loss. North British & Mercantile, \$2,000; loss about \$150.

AVONLEA, SASK.—Premises of Avonlea Mercantile Company, King George Hotel, Chinese restaurant, two implement sheds and premises of Congo Lumber Company destroyed, July 4.

ASHCROFT, B.C.—Considerable portion of town destroyed, July 6.

ALVINSON, ONT.—House of N. A. McLean destroyed with contents in absence of owner, July 3. Origin, unknown; some insurance.

BERLIN, ONT.—Kreiner & Co's. furniture factory slightly damaged, July 2. Loss \$200, insured. Fire originated in boiler house.

BERLIN, ONT.—City incinerator building damaged, July 3. Loss slight; insured; origin unknown.

MONTREAL.—Basement of St. Mary's College, Bleury Street, slightly damaged, July 4.

Dwelling at 361 Centre Street damaged, July 2. Allegations of incendiarism.

Hay and feed shed of E. Benoit, 2008a St. Hubert Street, gutted, June 29th.

Slight fire at 3008 St. Lawrence Street, June 30, evidently started by incendiary.

Apartment at 581 Cadieux Street damaged, July 1st. Firemen found blaze began in five places.

Stable of S. Duchesne, 388 Maisonneuve Street, damaged, and six horses and harness destroyed, July 2. Door was left constantly open. Three fires had taken place within a month, the property being insured after the first fire, of which nothing was said to the insurance company.

LIEUTENANT GRATTAN D. THOMPSON.

Lieutenant Grattan D. Thompson, second son of Mr. J. Gardner Thompson, manager for Canada of the Liverpool & London & Globe, will be attached to the 244th Overseas Battalion and go overseas with that regiment.

Lieut. Thompson has for a year past been active as signalling officer of the C.O.T.C., in training men for that branch of the work.

Mr. Gardner Thompson's eldest son is an officer of the Royal Canadian Regiment. He has been in France for some months past and has come through several engagements without injury.