PERSONALS

Mr. J. B. Laidlaw, manager for Canada Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society, left Toronto on the 19th instant for Florida, where he will spend a months well earned rest. While work and all the attendant excitement connected these days with the business of insurance, seems to be not objectionable to Mr. Laidlaw, no one will deny that his efforts in connection with the launching of the new C.A.U.A. has been largely instrumental in its success.

Mr. T. D. Richardson, superintendent for Canada, New York Underwriters Agency, spent some days visiting representatives of his firm in Quebec Province this week.

Mr. G. E. Moberley, manager for Canada Northern Assurance Company has been visiting Halifax, and St. John, N. B. during the past week.

Mr. J. Gardner Thompson, manager for Canada Liverpool & London & Globe is at present in the West where has been visiting important centres in British Columbia and Manitoba. He is expected to return in the course of two weeks.

Mr. W. S. Jopling, manager for Canada, Commercial Union has returned from New York, where he met General Manager E Roger Owen who has been on this side for some days visiting the United States branch of his Company. Mr Roger Oven sails for home tomorrow per S.S. Mauretania.

Mr. J. H. Labelle, assistant manager, of the Royal has returned from a brief business trip to the West.

MENACE OF FAMINE AS A LIFE INSURANCE PROBLEM.

Discussing the relation between famines and epidemics, in an interesting article, The Insurance Monitor, New York, puts an important sidelight on the subject in the following:

Unless the stories from central and western Europe are exaggerated, that continent is menaced by famine on a scale for which modern history furnishes no counterpart. It has been assumed that with our modern systems of transportation and intimate commercial relations, the danger of such a catastrophe was negligible. But the results of the awful war from which Europe has just emerged had not been reckoned with. Famine and pestilence are twin allies. The great plague which at such frequent intervals a few centuries ago desolated Europe has been estimated to have cost the lives of from twenty to nearly fifty per cent of the population. The source of that awful visitation has been traced to western Asia and has been charged to the effects of famine in the lands from which it originated. We are witnessing another wide spread epidemic of influenza followed by pneumonia throughout both Europe and America. An abnormal toll of death rates is bound to follow.

The relation between famines and those bacteriological diseases which at times sweeps the continents in epidemic form is still an unsettled problem. But it is no longer a question that these disorders are accelerated and made more deadly by whatever reduces the physical stamina of the people. The contingency of such a frightful mortality as that which in times past attended the black death in Europe may be remote. But the contingency of such an epidemic mortality as would seriously disturb the calculations of life companies is by no means so remote. On the contrary the experience of our American companies during the last two years of this epidemic comes as a warning that they should be prepared if need be to meet a wider fluctuation from their normal loss rates than has heretofore been shown in their experience. The history of past epidemics goes back to ancient Greece and Egypt and the countries bordering on the Mediteranean. It is a story of occasional abnormal fluctuations from the current death rates such as the modern world has not experienced during the comparative recent interval covered by life insurance. But such a contingency is no violation of those broader laws of average which evolution has shown to regulate the flow of life.

After the great fires of Chicago and Boston and Baltimore had demonstrated to the fire companies that such fluctuations before unknown were liable to be experienced, special provisions were made by many of them to provide a reserve against the reoccurrence of such disasters. The question for our life companies to consider, in view of our existing situation, whether for greater security it would not be well for them, too, to set aside a special reserve against excessive loss through epidemics.