

## Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

### NEW YORK INSURANCE LETTER.

New York, Dec. 31, 1902.

The re-insurance by the great Metropolitan Life, of this city, of the risks of the Sun Life, of Louisville, need not have been a surprise in any sense. The risks of the Sun Life, of Louisville, were nearly all industrial, and a good line of business will be added to the already overwhelming bulk of the Metropolitan's insurance in force. The Sun is but one of a number of the small industrial companies throughout the country that will, sooner or later, be compelled to take this same step. The industrial business is peculiar and difficult to conduct to a successful issue. It involves large expense and only the best management and the most rigid methods can bring safety and profit. It may be said with certainty that it is absolutely impossible for a company to start in the industrial business to-day, unless prepared to sink millions of dollars as an investment, with any hope of prolonging its life. The Metropolitan has already taken several other industrial companies under its ample wing, and while it is not strictly in the business of reinsuring, we should not be surprised to see it gather others into its fold.

While speaking of the Metropolitan Life, it is timely to mention the growth of the Company's real estate buildings around Madison Square in this city. When it built its first structure in Madison Square, the building was thought to be spacious and palatial, indeed. Since then, one addition has been erected more extensive than the first building, and another purchase of land adjoining has recently been made. When finally completed, the building of the Metropolitan Life will be one of the largest and finest business edifices in the country.

The long exemption of this city from destructive fires has rendered the companies so confident and so inclined to independence, that many fear there may be a break in the New York Fire Insurance Exchange at any time. Prosperity appears to be good for present profits, but bad for the tenacity of the companies, when it comes to breaches of good faith and good practices. Perhaps a good round loss might not be an unmixed evil at the present time, under the circumstances mentioned.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters has issued a monologue on the subject of valued policy laws, in which it seeks to instruct the public as to the really unjust and finally unprofitable character of such legislation. The great difficulty hitherto has been to get such literature actually into the hands of the public. If a system could be devised by which this literature could be distributed by agents in their respective communities, a great deal of good might be accomplished.

Senator John F. Dryden, President of the Prudential, has at last issued a definite announcement stating that the proposed combination of the life company with the Fidelity Trust Company, of Newark, has been abandoned as impracticable. Your correspondent has been inclined to criticize the scheme from the beginning, and his semi-prophecies are now realized, the Prudential, in the meantime, losing, it is said, a large amount of business on account of the damaging rumours afloat as to the Company's intentions. President Dryden intimates in his announcement that other means have been found to bring about practically the same result which was sought by the proposed merger.

The great industrial companies in this section are much

disturbed by the determined attack on child insurance, resulting from the alleged murder in Philadelphia of several infants for the sake of the insurance money. Although there was no adequate cause for the sensation, it takes very little to stir up the press and the sensation-loving public when the question of human life is concerned. This ground has been fought over so many times that it seems unfortunate that the companies should be put to the trouble and expense of again defending themselves in the public eye.

Just as the fire and life insurance companies were congratulating themselves that all the States were likely to adopt uniform blanks, the information comes that some three or four insurance departments refuse to abide by the wishes of the others and will continue to require information on a different basis from that furnished to other States. It seems that while State supervision lasts, the way of the insurance managers will never be a bed of roses.

A notable change in insurance journalism in this city occurs on the first of the year when Mr. H. E. Roberts, one of the editors and publishers of the "Surveyor," retires from that paper to join the official staff of the Inter-State Life, of Indianapolis. Mr. Roberts has been very successful in journalism, and will doubtless make a repetition of this success in his efforts in the life insurance field.

QUERIST.

### TORONTO LETTER.

The Late Grand Trunk Accident—The City Property Insurance Rates—In re Calendars—Journalistic Rumours—An Excellent Paper—Good Work of Institutes.

DEAR EDITOR.—The frightful accident last Friday evening on the Grand Trunk Railway, at Wanstead Station, when a fast passenger train made a head on collision with a freight train, causing the death of 28 persons, and the wounding and maiming of over thirty others, has given a shock to this western community not soon to be forgotten. We are told that a minute and a half more time would have allowed the still moving freight train to enter the siding, and leave the main line clear, this averting the catastrophe. It is a very pitiful story, and our sympathies go out to the relatives of the slain and the wounded ones, in the many saddened and desolate homes. An added pathetic feature of the case is the fact that the calamity fell amid the festivities and gladness of the Xmas season. Out from the warm embraces of dear ones, and the hearty hand clasps and farewells of friends, down to the frightful sufferings and violent deaths, was a transition piteous to behold.

It is to be hoped that some day the American Block System will be in use upon our railway lines, for had such been in present use, the above accident could not have occurred. The Block System is an expensive one to work efficiently, I believe, but as a preventive of collisions it is well nigh perfection.

The city officials and the Toronto Board Secretary are now engaged off and on in their triennial wrangle over rates for the new three-year insurance schedule of the various city properties, always excepting those withdrawn from the schedule by the grace, or courtesy, or favour of some high civic official, and on behalf of some favoured agent or agents, company or companies. The new City Hall, during the many years it was in course of completion, yielded many nice fat premiums under sundry Builders' Risk policies and permits, to certain selected offices, via the favoured agents aforesaid. Now that the unexpected has happened, and the building is completed, certain of the unfavoured insurance companies very reasonably expected that this large and choice risk would be passed into