

PERSONALS.

R. JUNKIN, Superintendent of the Imperial Life Assurance Company, has been visiting Montreal during the past few days.

MR. G. H. ALLEN, of Kingston, Inspector of the Standard Life, and Mr. Johnston, the energetic representative of the same company, at Pembroke, were in the metropolis on Wednesday last.

MR. R. HOPE ATKINSON, Agency Director of the New York Life in this city, has received a telegram from D. P. Kingsley, 3rd V. P. of the Company, congratulating Mr. Atkinson on the business of the Montreal branch for the year, and especially for the month of November.

MR. S. M. KENNY, the late Secretary of the Federal Life Assurance Company, who was recently appointed Manager of the Excelsior Life, Toronto, was presented on his departure for Toronto with a handsome gold-headed cane by Mr. David Dexter on behalf of the Federal Life Office staff. Mr. Kenny has been connected with the Insurance business for 17 years, and appears to be gradually ascending the ladder.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by Correspondents

TORONTO LETTER.

Something more about the Salvage Corps for Toronto.

—An interesting meeting anent.—Committee uses.—The City would like the Insurance Companies to pay for the Salvage Corps.—The Social and Business Improvement in Toronto.—Hopeful Signs.

Dear Editor:—Last week, Mr. Alderman Sheppard, Chairman of the Fire and Light Committee, with certain of his confreres, met by appointment a committee of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters. The request for this meeting came from the city people, so that submission of some details, and a general discussion of the proposed Salvage Corps might be had. The item of cost and the number of men to be provided by the city are yet to be given. These have been promised by the worthy Alderman whose pet scheme this Salvage Corps matter seems to be. A later meeting will, therefore, be necessary. I see by the Daily Press Report of this meeting that the public will be led to believe that the Underwriters have consented to reduce the rate (presumably the remaining 15 per cent. of the conflagration extra is meant) if the city will provide a Salvage Corps. This I am told is not the fact, because the Underwriters' Committee did not even consent to recommend this. If they had so consented, it is quite unlikely the Insurance Companies would agree to make any such bargain. At least, their feeling to-day points this way. One daily amusingly says: "It was developed," at the aforesaid conference that the "insurance people wanted a Salvage Corps to complete (!) their feeling of "security." It is surprising how set in the public mind is the belief that all fire brigades, fire appliances, salvage corps and the like are for the benefit of the Insurance companies almost solely, and that, therefore, the companies should pay a share of their ex-

pense. "We are doing this for you," and "you should reduce the rates" or, "you should contribute to the expense of the Salvage Corps because you benefit." Certainly, Fire Insurance Companies, in some places, have been and are contributing in this way, but I hold it is an unfortunate example to set, and besides, I think, unbusinesslike. Let the general principle always prevail, that where the standard of excellence set up by the Companies associated, for any town or city, is reached and maintained, there the lowest rates possible under it at once apply. Such a course would be both reasonable and defensible, also dignified. A door once opened to allow to municipalities pecuniary assistance towards doing something which it is for their general benefit to do any way must always be a difficult one to shut. Precedents often prove awkward. Give your people, insured or not insured, alike, the best fire protection you can. We will charge you rates according to the excellence of your appliances. This should be the regular dictum of the underwriters. The daily paper from which I quoted winds up its article by saying "the views of the civic representatives were met in a kindly and conciliatory spirit." Just so. It was a delightful four o'clock *à la tete*, without the tea and confetti, and without the ladies. These committees of the Toronto Board and indeed of the C. F. U. A. are alike useful for the interchange of views, and for getting at the bottom of things. Much detail is gotten over too. The way is prepared for definite action, if desirable, later. They are also so irresponsible, and non-committal of constitution and essence, and leave free and untrammelled the larger body they act for. It is "Congress," after all that has the power of completion, of ratification.

I am glad to refer to the great improvement still in progress in our city affairs generally coming in with the revival of business. One evidence of this is the filling up of vacant dwellings and sundry shop tenements, whose owners must have for a long time been without revenue therefrom. Perhaps this improvement in the aggregate may not be a large matter, but it is an indication of the healthy trend of affairs in our midst. There are many signs around that our middle class people especially have money to spend on the recreations of the day, and on many of what are called the "superfluities." So that the days of closest retrenchment, of small economies, seem to be passing away, I trust forever, from many homes. For this good our Thanksgiving was meet and proper, and was earnestly given.

Yours,

Arid.

Toronto, 5th December, 1898.

LONDON LETTER.

23 November, 1898.

FINANCE.

The event bulking most largely this week is the approaching flotation of the American Thread Company. Walter Judd, Ltd., is giving out the prospectus to the press, and all day long crowds of eager advertisement canvassers besiege its offices in the city.

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There is an improved outlook in the markets this week, although there still remains ample room for more betterment. Mr. Chamberlain's speeches, which were perhaps calculated rather to exasperate,