

features of a liberality that was undreamed of a few years ago have been issued by nearly all of the companies. Assessmentism has become, to all practical purposes, a thing of the past and, while there is a question as to the efficiency of the methods adopted by some of the companies for converting their risks into real insurance, a way has been found to make the change without undue hardship to the policyholders. Besides all this there has arisen a sentiment which promises to practically and effectively check rebating. True, the Anti-Rebate compact is dead, but its death was the signal for earnest, individual efforts at reform and, even now, the good effects are evident. Life insurance is fulfilling the promise of its glorious past and is rapidly becoming in fact, as it is in theory, "the first business in the world."

THE GRADED COMMISSION PLAN.—The graded commission plan would have been all right if the separation feature had been left out. If a resolution had been passed at Buffalo authorizing Union companies to meet the rates of non-Union companies in mixed agencies the commission difficulty would have been overcome. The Union people claim that they have had to take a back seat in all leading agencies, because the outsiders were paying excess commission. Why, then, not meet the non-Union companies on their own ground and pay as much for the business as they do? "On such a basis," says the "Spectator," "the Union companies would have the advantage, being stronger financially, and generally more popular. While there are some non-Union companies that are financially strong, and enjoy the public favor to a great degree, the majority are not so well known as the Union companies, and their policies are not in such great demand. Most agents would prefer to give the bulk of their business to the Union companies, all things being equal, but the agent will look out for his own pecuniary interests first of all, and will sell his business to the highest bidder, even when his personal preference might lie in another direction. By the graded commission plan, the Union companies were placed on equal footing with their competitors, and would unquestionably be able to hold their own. But when this proposition has a condition to it, requiring the agents to turn out of their offices the non-Union companies, each agent is brought face to face with the question: 'Where does my interest lie in this controversy between my principals' and self-interest will gain the decision every time.'"

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents

TORONTO LETTER.

The Civic Elections.—The Civic Insurance.—The Civic Responsibility.

Dear Editor.—The Municipal Elections in Toronto are this year of unusual interest, and develop a great deal more excitement and energy than usual. Around the three candidates, Messrs. Clark, Macdonald and Hallam, the hottest of the battle rages. As usual, in such contests there is much wild rough talk indulged in, and insinuations, often assertions, that are based on nothing but conjecture or hearsay. For-

tunately, the wordy turmoil lasts but for a short while, and a week hence things will fall into the usual routine, and the wicked things said and done in the heated term will doubtless be forgotten. One can thus have time to recover the shock received on learning through the newspapers what a villain one's most intimate friend is, and how vile his life shows up since he aspired to municipal honors.

Additional interest, for the fire insurance fraternity, has arisen in the civic contests, because the Secretary of the Toronto Board, Mr. McCuaig, in the exercise of his citizenship proposed for Mayor, on nomination day, Mr. E. Macdonald, and has in his support at public meetings, as well as off the platform, warmly and ably advocated his nominee. In doing this Mr. McCuaig has shown much shrewd common sense and used practical arguments, generally displaying an energy and ability much approved by his friends. I have before me a card which enjoins me to vote for E. A. Macdonald, the "Fire Underwriters Candidate." Mr. Macdonald's opponents gave prominence to the fact that his proposer was the Secretary of one of the "closest combines" in the City, alluding to the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters. All through the past few days Mr. McCuaig has fallen heir to much abuse and censure, but his public defence of his course, his rights and his position have been most admirable, and, besides being thoroughly conscientious and seeking no place or reward, his action is decidedly a public-spirited one, and he has fearlessly followed his honest convictions. It is perhaps needless to add that the connection of the Fire Underwriters with Mr. Macdonald as their candidate is all bosh, and a pure invention. The supposed connection was, no doubt, given out in the hope that the Toronto Board fearing discredit and injury to their craft, by seeming to enter into municipal politics, would call down their Secretary to the advantage of others, but Mr. McCuaig has publicly stated that he has, in no way, been interfered with, which was to be expected as all insurance men would readily know. In the midst of the election press another happening has tended to mix up the Toronto Board and their Secretary in a contest or dispute with the city regarding the rates for the insurance of the city properties falling due or expiring on 1st January. This incident was also seized upon by the Municipal politicians, and the most made of it to decry the Secretary of the Board who, as representing the Underwriters, had to appear before the Committee entrusted with the Insurance Schedule. I was surprised to see so respectable a paper as the "Mail" calling names, and going the length of saying the action of the Fire Underwriters in increasing the rates as a "deliberate hold-up of the City."

The facts about the City Insurance are about as follows:—Two months prior to the expiry of the Three Years Policies, the Secretary of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters asked the City officials for the new schedule of the properties to be insured, and later advised them of the likelihood that the average rate would be increased. It will here be noted the city had ample time given it to prepare the new schedule. On invitation the Secretary appeared before the Committee and stated that, owing to the unprofitable result to the Companies insuring the City, for the past six years, the Board had resolved to increase the average rate for three years from 1.75 to 2.25 per cent. The Committee objected to the rate and asked to have present risks carried for three months longer, clearly stating that the object of the request was to give the Committee time to recast the Schedule and re-adjust