

is likely to arouse great dissatisfaction. It is declared that Ontario will lose 6 members; New Brunswick, 1; Nova Scotia, 2; Prince Edward Island, 1; while British Columbia will gain 1; The N. W. Territories, 2; Manitoba, 6 and the Yukon, 1. It is a very eccentric arrangement to deprive Ontario of 6 members, although its population has increased, simply because another province has increased its population until its total about equals that of the Capital of Ontario. The provinces that are to lose one or two members have also increased their population. The framers of this arrangement had no conception of such conditions arising as have been created since confederation, or they would have not given one province a perpetual standard of membership and subjected other provinces to fluctuations regardless of their population.

• • • • •

When addressing a number of officers of the Grenadiers, Coldstreams and Scots Guards on 14th inst., the King said: "The war might now be regarded as approaching its conclusion." Coming from His Majesty, this judgment is weighty, but the "war" even may be concluded without the pacification of South Africa. Roaming gangs of bandits may harass the peaceable inhabitants and keep thousands of our troops on the alert for years, especially if they are encouraged by the insensate sympathy of British pro-Boers and others who talk of "the wickedness of suppressing a Republic," as though a Republic were necessarily the home of liberty, the fact being, that Republics have been more deeply stained with the crimes of tyranny than monarchies. Still the cloud is lifting, the mines are again being worked, trade is assuming its old-time activity at Johannesburg and other towns, train services are being maintained regularly, settlers are returning to their farms, public confidence is growing in South African securities, and, though the halcyon days of absolute peace may be long delayed, the country is undoubtedly emerging from a state of universal terror and dread to a condition in which trade and agriculture may be conducted free from the danger of shells and bullets.

FIRE AT ROYAL ELECTRIC WORKS.

A fire broke out early yesterday morning, the 16th inst., by which the works and plant of the Royal Electric Co., in this City, were seriously damaged. This caused a cutting off of power from a number of elevators much to the inconvenience of citizens. The managers and workmen are doing their utmost to supply light for to-night. The property is reported to be insured principally in the United States, with the exception of one Line in this City.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondent

LONDON LETTER. FINANCE.

2nd Jan., 1902.

The one topic of the hour is still the marked gains in South African mining stocks. Comparing the last making up prices of 1901 with the last of 1900 there are substantial gains—and it must be recognized that these gains are almost wholly the results of the last three weeks' movements of prices, and that they are being added to daily in various sized fractions. Angloes have risen from 6 to 7½; Apex from 5¼ to 8½; Bonanzas 3¼ to 5¼; Ferreira 19½ to 22½; Rand Mines 38 to 44¼; Wemmer 16¼ to 22¾, and De Beers 28½ to 39¼. I put these quotations in, although already they all show greater gains because they point out definitely the general upward tendency.

Obviously, the market has made up its mind that end of the war or not, "Kaffirs" are going to have their long-delayed appreciation. The promoters are looking up any Transvaal gold claims they may have had locked away in cupboards for the last couple of years and are preparing them for public fluctuation; the financial dailies and weeklies are commencing to cater for South Africans most conspicuously. Whilst we are all declaring that nobody says "boom," it is getting pretty obvious that with very little more excitement the public would take the bit between its teeth and gallop wildly away into the region of absurdly inflated values.

The stride made in the prices of diamond shares is interesting, both as regards its extent and also from the fact that it follows very soon after a dexterous re-arrangement of shareholdings in favour of the Right Hon. Cecil Rhodes, and his fellow life-governors.

Reviews of the past year are all in order just now, but I have only space to record one or two items with their present position. For example, Home Rails, after having been dillently depressed all the year, have commenced to liven up just prior to the declarations of the half-year's dividends. American Rails have run their usual erratic course and "as per," the British inventor has lost considerably more than he has gained out of it. With regard to the general requests for capital, made to the public, there is little to record that does not border on stagnation. New issues to the number of 364, and the value of \$884,500,000, were advertised, against 434 worth \$962,500,000 in 1900. Had it not been for the number of West African mining companies floated and the \$525,000,000 in public loans, 1901 would have shaped still worse by comparison.

As for the new year's prospects most people have determined that there is to be a marked contrast to last year's. We have had trade depression at home and abroad; grave continental crisis; protracted drought in Australia; famine and plague in India; disturbance in China, and a general heavy fall in stock prices, accompanied with rises in coal, etc. Now, we feel that the long and laboured war is drawing to a close, that Consols and Government stocks generally are to rise; and that there will be an outburst of confidence all the way round.

INSURANCE.

Insurance in 1901, having been dealt with by half a hundred other scribes, will be passed by myself with two re-