

the author of the civic insurance bill) have lain down together, and, reversing the ancient prophecy, the lamb is no more, and a community mourns its premature demise. After all, it takes drastic measures sometimes to teach wisdom; but a million dollar fire should surely be lesson enough to amateur legislators not to tinker with matters they know so little about. I should think Ald. Lamb of Toronto may safely consign his scheme to the archives of the local Museum, and thank his stars that the lesson has been learnt at so little cost to himself and his friends, while he remains a wiser if not a sadder man—*Verò Sap.*

## Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by Correspondents

### TORONTO LETTER.

*Some Norwich Union changes.—A prospect of usefulness ahead of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters.—Special Meetings.—Fire appliances, etc.—The approximate losses in Toronto fires.—Two "cases of fires" not before enumerated.—The splendid heroism of the insurance companies in paying losses.—A pathetic feature.—Ignored, but no slight intenced.—Our Mayor.—Our Lamb.*

DEAR EDITOR,

Mr. C. A. Pilon, hitherto Toronto agent for the White Star Steamship Line, has now received the appointment of general agent for Ontario for the same company, this being the reward of his success. Mr. Pilon is also city agent of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Company.

Though not officially announced, it is somewhat of an open secret that Mr. J. B. Laidlaw, at present inspector of the Lancashire Insurance Company, is to have the general agency for Ontario of the Norwich Union Fire. Mr. Alexander Dixon, I understand, has been prominent in bringing about this appointment, preferring to represent the Norwich Union only for Toronto and vicinity.

The Toronto Board will resume its sittings after the holiday recess, on Monday, the 14th instant. Certainly a great deal of moment to this organization has happened since it last assembled. There will be no lack of subjects requiring the closest attention of members at this point in its history. A special meeting of the Board was held after the last fire, called to consider the question of an advance in rates, as usual on such occasions. It is expected that something will be done this time, and done promptly. After discussion and exchange of views, the meeting was adjourned for a few days, when it is expected the Board will know what the intention of the City Council is regarding an immediate provision of the necessary steam fire engines and other appliances to perfect the future fire protection of this city. The Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters have now, so to speak, the whip hand; will they rise to the opportunity, and, by the exhibition of a determined and united front in the direction of an immediate advance of rates, to apply until such time as the city actually have supplied the extra fire plant needed, show they have some backbone? In my humble opinion, any number of steam fire engines, short of four, will be insufficient, and steam fire engines are the *instant need of Toronto*.

Montreal has eight engines, and whatever may be the shortcomings of that city from an underwriter's point of view, it can be fairly said that the walls of Montreal buildings are substantial, and not given to toppling over and destroying neighbors. Anent these two huge fires, after all, it was the unexpected, from the Lamb standpoint, that happened,—one and a half million dollars of property destroyed, with a loss as estimated to the insurance companies of three-quarters of a million, and, sad to say, the death of one fireman and the disabling of others. The immediate cause, seemingly a lack of steam fire engines, and a low water pressure consequent on the water-pipes being of too small diameter; a remoter cause, the culpable neglect of the city corporation of 1894 to heed the repeated warnings and recommendations of their own Fire Chief, the Fire Underwriters and others. It is now in order for some newspaper man to interview Alderman Lamb as to the prospects of his pet fad,—the Municipal Insurance Scheme. I suppose he

has something to say. Let us hear it. Other municipalities no doubt such as Brantford, Thorold and others, would like to have his views now. One of the most beautiful and touching features of this great double disaster to our fair city is the extraordinarily handsome way in which the insurance companies are acting as regards their liabilities. Actually they are paying their losses as soon as ascertained, nay, more, they are not only coming up smilingly to take their punishment, but, by cable and wire, sending comforting, reassuring messages and missives to their insured, to the effect that their claims will really be paid, and that they are doing all they can to hurry payment. Don't cry; mamma is coming. It is all just too kind and lovable. Sweet are the uses of adversity and the customs of the prompt payers, for in our troubles we distinguish our real friends. It is stated that the Home office of one of our leading Fire Insurance Companies [all things Canadian now so markedly enjoying the warm interest of the mother country], in haste to have quick payments made, and to save time, cabled across direct to the local agent of the Company in Toronto, thus, and excusably, time being precious, ignoring the manager for the Dominion at Montreal. I do not vouch for the truth of this story, mind you, as it appeared in the *Daily Press*, and I have heard that when a newspaper gets in anything right about an insurance matter, there is generally something wrong. You will be glad to know that Mr. Kennedy has succeeded himself as Mayor for Toronto.

Lamb is now out of season.

Yours,  
ARIEL.

TORONTO, 12th Jan., 1895.

### FINANCIAL ITEMS.

The reserve of the Boston and New York banks shows a steady gain this year; that of the latter city's banks, at late report, shows \$35,300,000 in excess of legal requirements.

The plethora of money in London is evidenced by some \$15,000,000 having been subscribed in a recent month for new ventures, which is very largely in excess of many previous months.

The United States income tax is assessed first on the net income of companies, then again on the incomes of shareholders derived from dividends paid by such companies. This unjust duplication of the tax is strong ground for appealing against it, which is being done. We can hardly think the framers of the Act intended it to operate in this way.

Owing to very exaggerated, and in some cases wholly incorrect, reports of losses made by one of the Western banks, a statement relating to the accounts alluded to has been shown to several leading banks by whose general manager's instructions have been given to country agents to correct the rumors, and to remove the disquietude which they had caused.

The low price of wheat, according to an eminent statistical authority, is largely owing to the reduction in cost of transportation charges in recent years. The theory is based on the following facts—which must be regarded as a serious factor in this problem—the cost of carrying wheat from the grain fields of America to Europe has been reduced 65 cents a bushel in the last 20 years, and the cost of carriage to shipping points, 50 cents a bushel. In the last seven years the reduction in freight charges for wheat is equal to about 50 per cent. of the average price of wheat in England twenty years ago. As the cost of grain in England is the total cost of what the farmer sells it for, plus freight, handling and profits, if the cost of freight has been reduced as much as the price of grain has been lowered, it follows that the farmer's share has not been reduced. At any rate it is clear that the burden of the entire reduction in price of wheat cannot have been wholly borne by the growers.