

the bonds in the ordinary way, which long and wide experience has shown to be the easiest, safest and most economical.

#### Toronto's Water Supply.

THE citizens of Toronto are congratulated on a step having been taken to secure advice on the water supply from one of the most eminent of hydraulic engineers. This expert, Mr. Mansergh, C.E., has now charge of a gigantic scheme for enlarging the water supply of Birmingham, England, compared with which any scheme needful for Toronto is a trifle. The insurance companies operating in the Queen city have much reason to feel gratified at this movement, as it promises to result in the fire protection there being raised to a higher standard. We note that the element in the City Council, who seem fond of playing at being engineers—not one of whom would be trusted by his neighbors to lay a house drain—has elected a committee to assist the English expert. As the health of the city is at stake, not one moment should have been lost in taking action regarding the water supply. If any avoidable delay has taken place, the Toronto Council has assumed a serious responsibility. Inactivity at such a crisis is inexcusable, more especially when it is almost certain to result in an epidemic of typhoid, diphtheria or other disease.

Already there are indications of this visitation being in embryo. Typhoid takes eight days to germinate before being distinctly recognizable, but the symptoms are always suggestive, and alarming. All over the city these symptoms are being observed, yet in spite of experience, in spite of the extreme gravity of the position in Toronto, there is a strong movement to prevent the water works being placed in the hands of a scientific expert.

#### A Valuable Treatise on Construction.

"How to construct and equip mills, factories and warehouses as fire hazards," is the title of a handy little pamphlet issued by Messrs. Scott & Walmsley, underwriters, Toronto. The writers regard fire-proof construction impracticable, but offer some suggestions towards slow-burning construction, combined with facilities for extinguishing fires. The proper use of money wasted in ornamentation and defective construction will often accomplish these ends, securing utility, economy and safety. The writers have had very long experience, and the work they have compiled is the result of their observation as underwriters as to what materials and constructive methods are most effective in reducing fire hazards. They lay special stress upon the danger of hollow spaces in walls, floors and roofs, where fire may lurk unobserved, and when detected where streams of water cannot reach. The cautions against lamps, lanterns, steam pipes, greasy rags, and other common causes of fires, and the best methods of avoiding these risks, are valuable. Indeed, the pamphlet abounds with thoroughly practical advice to builders and occupants of mills, factories and warehouses, which, if acted upon, would diminish fire hazards to a minimum.

#### THE HANDWRITING ON THE LIFE INSURANCE WALL.

It must be apparent to the careful observer that important changes are going on, slowly but surely, under prevailing methods of procedure in the life insurance business. We do not here refer to the evolution of the business as indicated by the general adoption of new forms of policies and the liberalization of old forms, not only in the United States and Canada but in Great Britain, but to the conditions under which the companies, composed of the two classes of level premium and assessment organizations, are now forced to appeal to the public for patronage. On this continent, at least, insurance protection has gradually become more expensive to the policyholder in both classes. That this should be so with the associations based upon the assessment idea is of course inevitable, as we have demonstrated repeatedly in these columns, for insurance "at cost," which in the early years of the company is low because the mortality is necessarily low, must also necessarily become higher and higher as the increasing mortality has to be met by recurring assessments upon the members—the only source from which loss payments can be supplied. The time has already come when the largest and most successful getters of business in the assessment ranks, which have really been managed with a fair degree of ability and honesty, are confronted with the alternative of calling for largely increased assessments from the members, or winding up entirely.

During the past few weeks several of these associations have greatly increased the assessment rate for old policy-holders, and adopted entirely new tables governing the admission of new members. The Mutual Reserve Fund Life of New York, the Northwestern Masonic Aid Association and the Covenant Mutual of Illinois, the Massachusetts Benefit Association, and some others, have adopted new rates, and these rates are announced in some cases as fixed premium rates, and are only about one-fifth lower than the "without profit" or non-participating rates of the level premium companies. They have and very gingerly admit the right to assess if need be beyond the announced table rate under the laws governing assessment insurance, but claim with great confidence that the necessity for such assessment is very remote. For several years to come the rate may be adequate, for it does not vary much from the twenty-year renewable term rate of some of the regular companies, but later on it will have to go up another notch undoubtedly. For example, the new rate of the Mutual Reserve, to become operative after January 1st next, is \$16.32 per \$1,000 at age 35, as compared with the straight non-participating rate of the Canada Life, which is \$20.40. The Confederation is a little higher, and several American companies have a non-participating rate very similar.

Now, this upward movement toward a definite premium charge by the leading assessment companies marks a new era, which promises greater stability and suggests the evolution of the original assessment plan until it shall come to offer sound protection on substantially the level premium basis, corresponding to