

derwriters are moving to have fire-proof curtain, which will resist fire, placed in the theatres of the city of Milwaukee. An ordinance of the Common Council provides that every theatre shall have a steel drop curtain. The front must be corrugated or sheet steel and the frame of the curtain must also be steel. The back of the curtain must be vitrified asbestos, 5-16 of an inch thick. Between the steel and the asbestos an air space of two inches will be required to be left.

THE ARKANSAS SITUATION.—It is announced that the Queen Insurance Co. as well as the Royal are prepared to issue policies on Arkansas property direct from its Atlanta general Southern offices, on applications received from owners or their attorneys and agents. It is understood further that the former agents of these companies in the State of Arkansas will be credited with commissions on business written in the irrespective territories, to be paid them when it may become lawful under State laws to do so.

Inasmuch as this is practically what some other companies are already doing, in an indirect way, the action of these large and responsible companies will be heartily welcomed by Arkansas property owners. In St. Louis and Memphis, where most of the Arkansas merchants have important business connections, there has been much dissatisfaction among the jobbers with quality of the fire indemnity heretofore offered.—"N. Y. Commercial Bulletin."

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

NEW YORK INSURANCE LETTER.

New York, November 1, 1905.

The two topics of paramount interest here at the present time and which of necessity seem associated with each other are the life insurance investigation, which for the brief present has come to a close, and federal supervision of insurance, an issue which is sought to be brought about by Senator John F. Dryden, President of the Prudential Insurance Company, in which he has been apparently seconded by President Roosevelt.

As regards the life insurance investigation, nothing definite has been brought out that was not known before by those posted in insurance. Great stress has been laid by the inquisitors, whose views have been reflected in the headlines of the daily papers, upon the large salaries paid to the presidents of certain insurance companies. No account is taken, however, of the results accomplished, and as for life insurance expenses no mention is made of the \$60,000,000 paid out in 1904 in commissions to agents, made necessary by the fact that the public has to be persuaded to the last ditch in order to induce it to insure. Whether this is the fault of the companies or of the public itself is a question which the committee has not yet taken up. It is possible that investigation may result in changes in management and certainly it may result in some changes of method, but that any radical revolution in the conduct of the life insurance business, and especially in the cost of life insurance will result from these inquiries is altogether improbable.

As to federal supervision the movement in this direction seems likely to be throttled at the outset, owing to the hostility of a great portion of the insurance interests. Fire insurance almost as a solid body appears to be against it, and all the life insurance companies, with the

exception of a few of the largest, have failed to appreciate the benefits promised from national control. The bill will undoubtedly come up in the forthcoming meeting of Congress, but it is doubtful whether it will receive sufficient encouragement to cause it to obtain serious consideration.

Hints have been made from time to time that the affairs of the Fire Insurance Exchange might with profit be investigated in order that methods might be improved and economies effected in various departments. A committee having this in charge with Thomas A. Ralston, of the Northern, at its head, is now engaged in an investigation and it is thought that the committee will energetically proceed with its work.

Prosperity in the West and South is given as a reason for a falling off in fire insurance business in this city. The theory is that those sections are doing a larger proportion of the business of the country than usual, and, therefore, stocks of goods have not piled up in New York as rapidly and fully as usual. New England has complained of dull business from the same cause.

NOTES.

The Continental Insurance Company is building a fine new structure at 158 Montague Street, Brooklyn, and expects to occupy it by February, 1906.

The Home of this city has started a special department for improved risks, by means of which it expects to compete with the mutual companies for sprinkled and protected business.

Competition in the surety business continues active, one evidence being the number of new surety companies organized within the past year. Great as is the field for this business it is thought in some quarters that it is being overdone.

Worthy of note is the death on October 21, of Frederick Grinnell, the inventor of the automatic sprinkler bearing his name which has obtained larger vogue than any other device of the kind. Mr. Grinnell died in Providence at the age of 69.

Another recent death is that of Max Danziger, President of the New York Plate Glass Insurance Company and of the City of New York Fire Insurance Company, who passed away at Heidelberg, Germany, on the 28 ult. Mr. Danziger was highly connected in New York business circles.

It is rumored that the next company to be taken up by the Legislative Investigating Committee, after the vacation now preceding election, will be the Prudential, of New Jersey, and possibly the Metropolitan Life of this city may follow the Newark company upon the stand.

QUERIST.

LONDON LETTER.

London, England, October 20, 1905.

FINANCE.

The money question still remains the dominating influence of the market here. A bank of England 5 per cent. minimum rate for discounting bills is expected to be announced every Thursday now, but up to the time of writing, it has happily not matured. Consols keep at the low water figure, 88½, which is exactly the figure to which they dipped twelve months ago. In the meantime, they have been as high as 92. Even allowing for the 2½ per cent. rate of interest replacing the former 2¾ per cent. there is still a tremendous fall from the 114 of 1896.

Electrification of London's steam railways and the construction of new electric subway lines proceeds rapidly.