

**Water Supply  
for Fires.**

A prominent official of the Glasgow staff of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company read a valuable paper on Tariffs in that city last month. He considered that the most effective method of improving the supply of water would be to lay down a separate main in congested districts, as, without an abundant supply of water, the best organized fire brigade could not be effective. The use of sprinklers and spreaders was suggested for congested areas, assuming that adequate water pressure and volume could be obtained. He suggested that a special charge be made for each storey above four. Fire-proof structures, composed of iron and concrete, in which large quantities of combustible material are stored, were condemned owing to the risk of a sudden collapse of such a building in the event of a fire. The elimination of hazardous features, such as beams in vents, unsafe steam boilers, stoves, ovens and flues was recommended to be done by a civic by-law. A law regarding party walls, he was of opinion, erred on the side of leniency, if it only insists on six-inch brick walls for one storey, nine inches for two storeys, twelve inches for three storeys and fourteen inches for four storeys. The danger from windows opposed to each other at an angle was referred to.

**One Month's Crop  
of British  
New Companies.**

A London, England, paper gives details of 1,155 new companies that were registered in the metropolis during December last. Their aggregate capital amounts to \$228,470,000. In November there were 389 new companies registered, whose total capital was \$96,115,000. In the two last months, therefore, of 1900, the new companies organized in Great Britain numbered 1,544, with an aggregate capital of \$324,585,000! While the extension of new joint stock enterprises is no sure evidence of national prosperity, it is incredible that the commercial activities of the old country are declining, when such an enormous number of new enterprises are being initiated. The call these new companies will make on the spare capital of the people of the United Kingdom is the more remarkable when so heavy a drain has been caused by the war loans. If the financial and commercial powers of the old land are declining, the British people do not seem to be aware of the alleged fact. Of the only three with a capital of \$1,000,000, one is a company to develop mining in China, another to extend the production of railway equipment, and the third is a lighting company. A number of electric supply enterprises are on the list. We note the names of several of the oldest and most prosperous manufacturing firms in England, each organized as a joint stock company, the tendency of the times being to utilize the ever-growing savings of the people as the capital of large enterprises. The "Financial News" gives the total number of companies registered from 1844, when joint stock com-

panies were first legislated for, up to 1855, as 4,049, 80 per cent. of which were still-born. From 1856 to 1861, 2,134 companies were registered; from 1862 to 1884, 23,140; and from 1885 to 1899, 48,350 companies. The total capital of the companies registered between 1856 and 1861 was about \$603,000,000, and the total capital of the companies registered from, and inclusive of, that period is returned at no less a sum than \$29,514,900,000, their number being 73,624. There are, however, only 29,730 of these companies in operation to-day, whose aggregate capital is \$8,113,200,000. The difference between the total capital of the companies registered and the capital of those in existence represents, withdrawals from business, bankruptcies and failures to complete organization.

**Lord of the  
Transvaal.**

When King Edward VII. was proclaimed at Pretoria, one of the titles was given as "Supreme Lord over the Transvaal." We speak of this as a "title" because it has been so designated in the London papers. We, however, doubt this being a title at all, but simply a declaration of the King's supremacy in the Transvaal. King Edward is "Supreme Lord" over all his dominions, but it was, no doubt, deemed desirable to proclaim his supremacy over the Transvaal at Pretoria in order to leave no doubts in the minds of the people of South Africa as to the two republics having been annexed to the British Empire. There is a flood just now of very loose talk on constitutional matters which is based not on precedents and history, but on imagination. It is said, for instance, that the phrase "Supreme Lord over the Transvaal," in relation to the King's position, was selected to foreshadow some quite fanciful undesignated form of independent self-government to be accorded to the Boers. There is a touch of absurdity in this theory, as it involves this marvel, viz., the abandonment by the King of his position as "Supreme Lord over the Transvaal," after being proclaimed at Pretoria, as vested with that authority. No! King Edward is "Supreme Lord" over the British Empire, and the sooner the Boers quietly acknowledge themselves to be British subjects and behave accordingly, the better it will be for them in every sense. As such they will have wider freedom and a wider career open to themselves and their sons than under the narrow Kruger despotism.

**RECENT FIRES.**—A fire at St. Anne's, on the 4th inst. damaged stores and dwellings to extent of \$15,000. One cottage injured is alleged to have been the place where Moore wrote his "Canadian Boat Song." Defective chimney the cause. Two fires caused by lamp explosions occurred on the 4th in this city: one on St. Charles Borromeo street, the other on Dubord street. The Northern Electric Co. had a touch of fire on the same day. Loss in each case small.