

only a few instances that can be quoted. Statistics covering all fires occurring in sprinkler risks are public property which "Ariel" might consult to advantage.

In conclusion, let me say there is just and sufficient cause for local agents to be prejudiced against sprinkler equipments, because while they save money for the companies interested for reducing the loss rates they diminish the income of the agent or broker handling the risk by reducing the rates.

W. VAN R. REYNOLDS.

Montreal, May 28, 1901.

LONDON LETTER.

FINANCIAL.

23 May, 1901.

Holidays are pretty frequent just now on the Stock Exchange. There was the First of May; then there was the Centenary, and, finally, there was Saturday and Whit Monday. The Centenary was not made a great feature of. Members simply stayed away from business and the financial papers broke out into a rash of reminiscences. A century ago there were only 500 members, and they paid \$52 per annum. Now there are 4,673 paying \$200 per annum each. The official list quotes over 4,000 securities against 300 a century ago.

When the romance of the House comes to be written, what an absorbing story it will be! In 1807 there were the \$250,000 frauds on members by Daniels; in 1814 there was the rig in Omnium on false news of the downfall of Napoleon; in 1825 the new company mania with the inevitable crash; in 1837 an American panic ruined scores of members; in 1845 burst upon the world the desolating railway mania and collapse; in 1857 the Indian Mutiny produced a panic, America's finances gave fresh trouble, and 70 members failed.

Later we have Overend Gurney crisis, the 1873 Northern Pacific Railroad crash, the Eupion Gas frauds, the 1880 default of the Redding and its sensational consequences, the Baring smash up and the barefaced "rig" in the shares of the Warner's Safe Cure Company, the 1893 Australian banks' disasters, the "rig" in Lady Hamilton shares, the Jamieson raid upset, the London & Globe fiasco and the latest American slump of all. In a hundred other ways the history of Gorgonzola Hall is interesting. Two other dates might be mentioned. In 1878 the courts decided that Stock Exchange operations are not legally gambling, and in 1893 the Exchange Telegraph Company was ordered to no longer supply the outside brokers with the tape prices.

Everyone knows Sir Thomas Lipton, the man who twenty years ago was an unknown Glasgow provision dealer, and who has now made over five million dollars out of the business and is on the Fackingham Falace visiting list. Three years have now passed since he transferred his hundreds of shops to a limited company, and in each of those three years the profits have diminished. Dividends have decreased and the market valuation of the shares is just now steadily falling away. It is the old, old story of over-capitalization.

One of our most widely advertised "bucket shops" is in trouble again, made a profit of nearly \$2,500 over a deal in Canadian Pacific. Before he had time to ask for a cheque to this amount he received a letter suggesting that his winnings and original stake should go into another "first-class deal which was absolutely certain," etc.

Most of the foolish clients of these and similar people would be asserted, and soon their money disappears, owing to "cover running off." The gentleman in question said he would rather have his cheque. The reply came that "they" had decided to suspend all payments until the decision of one of their law court cases. They have now got another case to defend. It will all help to show the bare faced swindling that goes on here under the name of "outside broking."

INSURANCE.

It is always well to be agreeably disappointed, and the Liverpool and London and Globe has had that felicity. Expecting a decrease

in premiums, owing to its determination not to push business where rates had been cut too fine, it has found that there is an increase of nearly \$445,000. Raised rates largely account for this.

Amongst the changes which are taking place in the staff of this office are the appointment of J. M. Davies, the present head of the town and country departments, as assistant secretary in the home department, and the engagement of A. C. Dent, second officer in the foreign branch of the Sun, to be assistant secretary of the foreign department of the L. and L. and G.

At the general meeting the chairman, Sir William Henry Tate (son of the late Sir Henry Tate and head of the great firm of Liverpool and London sugar refiners), said some comforting things about that calamitous thing, American fire insurance. Last year was the only one where the L. and L. and G. had lost money in this department, and taking the last twenty years the profit had been very large indeed. He did not feel at all nervous about the trans-Atlantic business.

More gloomy was Quintin Hogg at the annual meeting of the North British and Mercantile. He accepted the generally prevailing theory about cycles of good and bad business, and alleged that the present bad cycle for fire insurance business was not yet over. Still, the shareholders' tenth of the profits for last year pays a dividend of \$5 per share and a bonus of \$2.50, which, to most people, would be the height of satisfaction.

Business generally is quiet. In the marine insurance section neither Liverpool nor London has much to brag about. There are several substantial losses recently to take the gilt off somebody's gingerbread, and in the overdue market there are many big risks outstanding. Fires have not been heavy, the destruction of Stafford Workhouse being the biggest. Life insurance does not exhibit any change, but there is the usual holiday activity in accident insurance. Impostures are off for the time being.

PERSONALS.

MR. W. G. ROSS, who for some years filled the position of Comptroller of the Montreal Street Railway, has been appointed secretary, in succession to the late Mr. Watts. The appointment of Mr. Ross is a popular one, as he is known to be a thoroughly capable official, Mr. E. Dube, who for a number of years has been in the general manager's office, has been appointed assistant secretary.

MR. D. P. KINGSLEY, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY was in the City on last Saturday, on official business connected with the New York Life. He was accompanied by Mr. Hubbell, General Solicitor and Mr. Devlin, Manager of the Real Estate Department.

THE NUMEROUS FRIENDS OF MR. THOMAS DAVIDSON, Managing Director of the North British, and he has hosts of them, will much regret to hear of his continued illness. We and they would be delighted to have news of his condition having taken a turn for the better.

AS WE GO TO PRESS we learn that Mr. J. F. Junkin has been appointed General Manager of the Amalgamated Companies, Manufacturers and Temperance and General Life and that Mr. H. Sutherland has resigned. We have no further particulars at the moment.