

Correspondence.

COMMON SCHOOLS NOT ACADEMIES.

Editor MONETARY TIMES.

SIR.—I notice an article in your issue of the 23rd instant, headed "Common Schools not Academies," in which reference is made to instruction in our schools, which is so misleading that I wish to correct it.

It was never proposed that the subject of Banking should be taught in the public schools of Winnipeg, and such a proposition would have been too absurd for our Board to have considered; but at the suggestion of a banker of this city a "Mock Bank" has been started in connection with the Commercial Course taught in our Collegiate Institute, which is attended by about 50 pupils, who have passed through the lower grades. This "Mock Bank" is similar to that recently started in the commercial department of the public schools at Buffalo, by the City National Bank of that city (to which I think your paper made favorable reference at the time of its establishment), and a similar course is adopted in many of the Collegiate Institutes in the United States, and also in all Business Colleges.

Our object is not to teach Banking, for, as you properly say, that can only be taught in a bank, but to give some instruction in a simple practical form to youths about to start out in business, with regard to a bank, its uses, functions, etc.

Yours truly,

JOSEPH CARMAN,

Chairman, Winnipeg Public School Board.

Winnipeg, Man., 27th Sept., 1898.

MODERN BRIDGE BUILDING.

Editor MONETARY TIMES.

SIR.—I trouble you with another letter on a subject which I see you admit to be of great public importance.

A bridge inspector should be a good mechanic; he will soon get a knowledge of strains, strength of materials, etc. He should be taken from the ranks of bridge builders or civil engineers, and should be immediately under the chief engineer of the railway. The kind of inspector I have in mind is something better than the men who simply examine bridges to see that timbers are not decayed, or nuts unscrewed.

In a paper read before the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, some years ago, J. Appleton, C.E., said: "I had occasion to compute the strains upon some Howe Truss bridges, and found that the iron was decidedly too weak. As, however, I was young and inexperienced, while the builder or engineer was one of the pioneers of Howe Truss bridge building, I showed my calculations to him, asking him to criticize them if wrong. After examining the figures, the builder replied: 'Well, your calculations are all right, that amount of iron would be required for that bridge, loaded; but we never use such heavy iron as that, it is not common practice.' So much the worse, one would think, for the practice."

The Ashtabula bridge accident, which occurred in 1877, in Ohio, a great many lives being lost, had the effect of attracting railroad men's attention all over this continent to the security or otherwise of railway bridges. A result was that such structures were more carefully inspected than ever before, because the results of defective construction of bridges were by that disaster brought so vividly to the attention of the community. Careful inspection of bridges is just as necessary now as then. And more is known now than then as to the character of iron and the way its strength is affected by concussion or by strain.

Mr. T. C. Clarke, one of the most eminent bridge builders in the United States, suggests, in a letter published some years ago, that to secure the safety of the public, the American Government should have a corps of bridge inspectors, to whom should be submitted all plans for new bridges, which they should have power to reject absolutely, if faulty; and in whom should rest the power to order what they might consider necessary repairs and alterations of existing structures. In the opinion of Mr. Clarke, this corps should be composed of United States military engineers. Is not something of the kind needed in Canada?

It is practical experience, combined with intelligence, and a well-trained mind, that makes the knowledge of a man in any profession valuable and his advice safe.

A maxim of the Legal Profession has it that "He who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client."

The doctors might, perhaps, say that "He who is his own doctor will have a corpse for a patient."

It is certainly true that in constructing and operating a railway, if its manager trusts to luck, he will have the devil for an engineer.

CONSTRUCTOR.

Toronto, 30th Sept., 1898.

AN INSURANCE LUMINARY.

Editor MONETARY TIMES.

DEAR SIR.—In your paper of the 16th ult., you refer to a Mr. J. Thomson Patterson as claiming to be an "Actuary" on the subject of Life Assurance. It appears he is the same man who appeared on a platform in Toronto lately and gave his endorsement to a large assessment institution, which has its head-quarters in this city.

It strikes me that I remember a Rev. J. Thomson Patterson, at a period now some years ago, first, as a Presbyterian clergyman in Western Ontario, and afterwards as a member of the staff of the Mutual Reserve Insurance Co., in Montreal, where he occasionally gave "supply" to vacant congregations.

When I read in your Insurance Notes that Mr. J. T. Patterson had posed as an actuary from New York, in order to boom the I.O.F., I was as much astonished, as if he had been made a D.D. of Knox College, in this city.

The chief High Ranger has a reputation for selecting suitable men for certain positions in his camp, and I think it will be admitted that he has made a "hit" in this case! But then we must remember that the majority of the policy-holders in Oronhyatekha's company don't care much for scientific facts or actuarial figures.

The intelligent public certainly owe a debt of gratitude to honest insurance journals, such as the MONETARY TIMES, for drawing aside the veil, and unmasking mountebanks, and demanding their authority for assuming the position of actuaries. The Rev. Mr. Patterson may have the necessary qualifications to lecture, but defend me from his actuarial powers. Surely some of the insurance names quoted in your article, eminent as they are, would have heard of this self-styled, actuarial writer, if he had had any real title to be called such.

I am, yours,

INSURANCE AGENT.

Toronto, October, 4th, 1898.

—The city of Kingston is just now agitated by a serious question of ethics. A prominent citizen gave a beggar woman five cents "to buy some milk." Immediately after he met her again carrying a pail of beer. He emptied the beer into the street, remarking, "that's the milk you wanted to get with my five cents." The beggar woman was no doubt in the wrong; but was the philanthropist justified?—Montreal Gazette.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS IN BRITAIN.

The report of the Board of Trade upon the accidents that have occurred on the railways of the United Kingdom, during the year 1897, has been issued as a British Blue-Book. This report deals with railway accidents from two points of view—viz., the safety of the travelling public and the safety of the men employed in working the traffic. The number of passengers killed in train accidents was 18, which is a large increase on the numbers for the two previous years, in both of which the number was only 5. Of these, 10 were killed in an accident at Welshampton, on the Cambrian Railway, and 3 in an accident at Rothbury, on the North British. Both of these accidents were caused by trains leaving the rails. On the other hand, the number of injured in train accidents was 324, as against 388 in the previous year.

The total number of accidents to passengers from causes other than accidents to trains reported in 1897 was 115 killed and 1,315 injured, as against 88 killed and 1,198 injured in 1896. When all classes of accidents on railways are taken into account, however, only 1 passenger is killed in 7,747,520 passenger journeys, and only 1 in 628,688 is injured. Season ticket holders' journeys are not included in these figures, because the number of them cannot be estimated; 1,286,508 season tickets were issued in 1897.

The number of collisions between trains and buffer-stops caused by trains entering stations at too great a speed, to which special attention has been called in previous returns, has, the report states, satisfactorily decreased; and in those cases which have occurred, the Board have continued to urge upon the companies the strict enforcement of the measures recommended by the inspecting officers of the department with a view to the prevention of this class of accident. The committee appointed in May, 1897, to "consider the efficiency of the means at present adopted of communication between the passengers in railway trains and the companies' servants in charge of the trains, and whether any particular system of communication in use or available is so efficient as to make its general adoption by the railway companies desirable," after taking evidence and witnessing trials of different systems now in force, has made a report on the subject, which has been accepted by the Board, and the department has entered into correspondence with the companies with a view to the adoption of the recommendations made by the committee.

Unfortunately, the numbers of railway servants killed and injured during shunting operations continue to be large.

FRENCH LIFE INSURANCE BUSINESS IN 1897.

The seventeen life insurance companies of French nationality doing business last year made further progress towards recovery from the check caused by the new regulations, made some years ago, when the premium rates were materially increased. The ordinary life policies in force increased on balance by £1,070,000, against £1,120,000 in 1896, and the new business represented £13,540,000. The growth of the annuity branch is, however, more remarkable. The new annuities granted amount to £287,892, a gain of £40,800, and after deducting those lapsed, the liabilities under this heading rose from £2,520,000 to £2,684,000. It is a feature in harmony with the French character to purchase annuities rather than insure their lives, and middle-class people freely sink their capital for the sake of benefit during their lives by securing a higher income. The rate of mortality was comparatively high at 1,482 against 1,382 in