

The New City Council. It is seldom that a City Council has been placed in a position to assume the reins of civic government under such favourable auspices as that of this city, which commenced its career in February of this year. The rate-payers seem to have arisen to the responsibilities of their duties in connection with the recent elections, and they will naturally expect some practical business reforms in civic administration. There are signs already of a healthy movement in the re-arrangement of some of the committees. We have, before this, advocated, for instance, that the Health Committee should be entirely separate from the scavenging or any other department. The purchase of supplies by aldermen should not for a moment be countenanced. The placing of the squares of the city under the same department with the parks seems to be a move in the right direction. Civic affairs ought to be conducted on ordinary business principles. We do not advocate changes being made in a hasty manner for the sake of appearing to do something, but, in any re-arrangements which may take place, due consideration should be given to all the circumstances in connection therewith before they are adopted.

Cuban Fire Fighters. One would hardly expect a fireman doing duty in a tropical region to display great activity. Yet the Civil Governor of Havana reports that, owing to the great rivalry existing between the two fire brigades of that city, the firemen have occasionally quarrelled and fought at fires for advantageous positions from which to extinguish the flames. Perhaps, if Governor Nunez would permit these enthusiastic fire-fighters to give a public exhibition of their prowess by playing the hose upon one another, each brigade by a cold cascade could quench this rivalry which is said to be becoming dangerous to the men themselves as well as to property. At present, while the former fight, the latter burns.

Capital and Companies. The tendency of the times in trade and commerce is toward the creation of companies. That the individual merchant or shop-keeper will be able to transact any large part of the world's business when brought in competition with these powerful industrial corporations is hardly likely, and the growth of this belief in Great Britain is shown by the large number of new English companies registered during the past year. Although smaller than in 1898, the total amount of capital thus invested has only been exceeded three times. The number of English companies registered last year was 4,529, with a capital of \$1,173,427,170, as against 4,653 in 1898, with a capital of \$1,204,277,520. The following figures relate to the shipping industry: In 1898 the capital of such was \$51,361,510, while last year it was \$62,168,325.

Overcrowding of Playhouses.

The recent action, brought by the holder of a reserved seat against the lessee of a Montreal theatre, to recover damages because of inability, owing to the crowded state of the aisles, to reach said seat, has not attracted much attention, although it is one of great interest to citizens generally, and life assurance companies in particular. The danger of permitting the crowding of aisles and blocking of entrances of places of public amusements must be manifest to everybody. In case of panic or fire, the disastrous consequences of this prevention of free egress are fearful to contemplate, and, if there is no city ordinance to prohibit such a condition of things as led up to the suit in question, there ought to be. Discussion of the causes leading to the dangerous over-crowding of theatres and street-cars are of little use. For the sake of the public health and safety, a strenuous effort to prevent both should be made.

A New Market for Canada.

It is to be hoped that the bright young Canadians now carrying muskets in South Africa will not permit martial ardor to altogether smother the commercial instincts which so many of them undoubtedly possess. The close of the present war ought to present some golden opportunities for the development of business, and there would seem to be no good reason why even this far away field should not be made a market for Canadian goods. Where we are sending men, we can send merchandise. Let us then hope that when not engaged in making good British subjects of rebellious Boers, our boys will occupy themselves in spying out this land of promise with a view to future expansion of business with the principal ports of South Africa. Our neighbours have a profitable annual trade with the Transvaal, and it is quite possible for our smart and active representatives, after they have beaten the Boers, to sell the vanquished a "bill of goods."

Busy Halifax.

The magnificent harbour of Halifax is the pleasant summer anchorage of the North American squadron, and the interesting old city is the home, at all seasons of the year, of Imperial troops. Of late years, a regiment of infantry, a battery of artillery and a detachment of engineers has constituted the regular garrison of the capital of Nova Scotia. In addition thereto, the city has three particularly smart militia regiments. Yet, used as the citizens are to the presence of soldiers and sailors, and accustomed as they are to witnessing the arrival and departure of troopships, the maintenance and embarkation of a large force of Canadian cavalry and artillery has made the city the scene of much excitement. It has also given considerable stimulus to business at a season of the year when trade is not expected to be brisk, and the merchants of this Canadian winter port are rejoicing in an expenditure