

## PERSONALS.

DR. THORBURN, Toronto, Medical director of the North American Life, represented that company at the meeting in New York last week, of the Medical chiefs of the leading life companies.

MR. HORACE FLEMMING, Manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia, has returned to Nova Scotia to make arrangements for removing his family to Dorval, for the summer months. In his absence, Mr. Waters, Inspector of the bank, who has been in the city since the death of Mr. Kennedy, will remain in Montreal.

## Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by Correspondent

OUR TORONTO LETTER.—We regret that, owing to pressure on our space, we are compelled to postpone publication of the interesting letter of our esteemed Toronto correspondent, "Ariel," until next week.

## LONDON LETTER.

24th May, 1899.

## FINANCE.

A steady flow of decent new industrial companies is at hand. With regard to Whiteley's, only 4 per cent. debentures will be issued to the general public most likely, the ordinary shares being monopolized by the vendor. Owen, a rival of Whiteley, will also float his business on the sea of limited liability. Then William Wallace and Co., the famous "inexpensive art," furnishers of Curtain Road is promised as an advocate for public subscription. After about eight months of negotiations, the combination amongst Bradford's wool-combing firms seems imminent. A committee has been formed to make arrangements for pooling the interests of about 20 leading houses. The textile machinery makers are also on the move in this direction.

There has grown up in several British industries, a system of alliances between employers and employed. For instance in the brass bedstead trade the conditions of the special industry some years ago, had reached an absolutely desperate position. Masters were getting next to nothing in the way of profits, and men, skilled mechanics for the most part, were working 60 hours per week for about \$5. This unbearable situation had been arrived at, owing to intense competition, and consequently undercutting and other evils.

To remedy this state of affairs, the Bedstead Trade Alliance was formed in 1895. Its first idea was to raise prices 10 per cent., but by now they have been raised 35 per cent. The employers engaged themselves to find work for all the men in the trade, or in the event of that being at times impossible, to pay the unemployed workmen an out-of-work allowance. The men were to also have a good share of the increase in prices, and their hours were reduced. The men on return pledged themselves never to work for an employer who was not in the Alliance. All the employers were thus compelled to join the Alliance, prices went up, and prosperity reigned where once was desolation.

This did not satisfy the bedstead dealers. They had to pay more for their goods and they chafed. A dealers' defence association has been formed and its scheme is now shaping. A factory-outfit it to be bought in Birmingham and shifted in its entirety to Belgium, where free from the power of the Alliance, it will make and export to England cheap bedsteads. The Alliance has not had a quiet career these three or four years. Recently, one of the masters broke with it, and in retaliation all his hands struck. His factory is now closed and possibly will be the one purchased by the dealers' association. I mention this episode at length, because such was the success of this original alliance, both from the employer's and the employed's standpoint, that it has been copied extensively in depressed industries, and last of all in the tin-plate trade. It is a good idea, but its weak point lies in the opportunity it gives to foreign competition.

The net profit earned by Lipton's, Ltd., in its first year of trade as a limited liability company, is \$1,088,100, being two hundred thousand in excess of the last year under the old regime. Shareholders receive 11 per cent. for the year, and \$225,000 is reserved. That other big industrial flotation of last year, the Fine-cotton Spinners and Doublers Association, Ltd., has also just finished its first year's trading. This is a combine of manufacturers. The net profits are \$1,495,075. Ordinary shareholders get a dividend of 8 per cent., and \$400,000 is reserved.

The copper tightness continues on the London market. Large consumers of the metal are just buying from hand to mouth, so to speak, and the decrease in consumption compared with last year is equal to 20 per cent. Numerous new mines are being brought forward, and floated.

## INSURANCE.

The U. S. Equitable's surplus is again in the court. This time Her Majesty's Commissioners of Income Tax wanted to assess the surplus earned by premiums paid in the United Kingdom. Justices Darling and Channell agreed on a decision for the Crown, so that unless there be a further appeal, the income-tax assessment of four hundred thousand dollars will have to be paid. The learned judges argued that the Equitable was not a mutual office, but one owned by proprietors, and that, therefore, the surplus ranked as profit and was taxable. It did not matter how the surplus was eventually disposed of. This is no doubt strictly correct, according to plumb-line verbal legality, but anyone who knows the constitution of the U. S. Equitable can see that the decision falls upon the policy-holders solely, and they alone suffer by it.

The Wesleyan and General Assurance Company is one of those offices which do not separate their ordinary from their industrial business totals. It has about five millions dollars worth of insurances in force, and whilst membership, income and reserve fund are on the increase, the expenses show a relative decrease. H. W. Manly reports encouragingly upon the results of the late quinquennium. The assumed rate of interest is at present 3 1-2 per cent., but will probably be reduced to 3 per cent. at the next valuation.

Owing to ill-health, W. Woodward, the managing director of the London and Manchester Industrial As-