

Correspondence.

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TORONTO LETTER.

Paper Box Factory Losses.—Vessel-owners and Marine Insurance Rates.—Our Ostrich Farm.—Hamilton's Loss and Hamilton's Gain.—Pangyric.—Is it desirable, and Possible to Increase Insurance Rates Throughout the Dominion?

Dear Editor.—The recent fire losses, on paper-box factories, in Toronto, has attracted the attention of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters. It was felt to be very unsatisfactory to find loss after loss on these plants following in close succession. The circumstances have had consideration, and from this time forward parties interested in effecting insurance on this class of risk will have to submit to an advance of one p.c. upon present rates. Gossips say that many vessel-owners will do their own insurance, i. e., carry their own risk during the present season, because of the large increase in marine insurance rates on the Lakes. It is a great pity, from the underwriters' point of view, that they were not doing this kind of thing last season. The Marine Companies would have been better off to-day had they done so. Now, we shall have an object lesson, if we watch results. Perhaps the great winds may not blow, nor mishaps occur with the regularity they usually do; but I fear they may. Owners may possibly carry their own risks during the softer part of the season, and save so much premium for the time, giving their risks to the Companies later as the stormy season comes on. It is an unbusinesslike hazard to take as suggested.

Regarding some new industries, I would like you to note that an enterprising man of this community is advertised as about to start an experimental Ostrich farm in, or near to, Toronto. These birds are said to breed well in certain localities in the United States, and to yield a handsome profit to their keepers. A crop of "clippings" from ostriches can be taken twice a year, and the yield from even a small flock, when in good condition, is said to run easily into hundreds of dollars. We have already domesticated under Aldermanic tutelage a little family of swans at our Island Park, and if room enough could be spared, I should think a pen of ostriches might do well over these. The sand would certainly be plentiful, in which these birds are wont to hide their heads when frightened, although I have my doubts about that legend. As to diet, the numerous daily picnics in the summer season would supply a variety of useful articles for consumption, ostriches being of the omnivorous class, and like goats, not particular as to what they take into their system. But, perhaps, this may be also a fabulous idea. Our Mr. Alderman Hallam plumes himself on his introduction and naturalization of the swans, at the Island; more fittingly he might come to *plume* himself, by favoring the ostriches being introduced there. If this proposed venture proves successful, as well it may, our ladies will be able to get "tips" at the farm, at reasonable prices. Speaking of tips reminds me of our Woodbine Races, now in full career, and that Hendrie, of Hamilton, has carried off the Queen's Plate for this year. The effect of this news on Hamilton people, was to set them wild with delight all Saturday night. These excellent people, though very sensitive, are dignified and usually un-

emotional in their ways, certainly not given to ecstasies, but I am told they have broken all bounds for once. I sympathize with them. I have always admired Hamiltonians. Hospitable, generous, and like all dwellers in a mountainous country, of a high-spirited, and frank bearing, they are also a lovable people. Yet another word on this subject. Philosophers tell us there are compensations found in every phase of life. As in the world of Nature, so in the world of politics, of business, of pleasure. Now, Hamilton having lost, or being about to lose, the Canada Life Head Office Establishment, has been given a Hendrie, and a "Butterscotch." What they may lose in dollars has been more than recompensed them in glory.

Someone has been suggesting that the Fire Insurance rates as a whole be advanced in the Dominion of Canada, and pleads as the motive for the suggestion that Fire Underwriting has for years been unprofitable in the Dominion. I doubt very much if the community would stand a general advance. Is there no other way of meeting the case? How would it do to reduce expenditures rigidly by 2 1-2, even 5 per cent? Reconsider the limits of insurance lines, i. e., the net amounts carried. It is certain that the ratio of expense is increasing, and also that large sums are too often paid as individual losses. A general investigation of matters in these two directions might possibly be profitable. It is not creditable, at least, to go on as companies are going, and not seek for some remedy to the present state of affairs. Besides, is it to be expected that the Home Offices will be content to go on forever, and not make money in Canada? If not, what will their remedy be?

Yours,

Ariel.

Toronto, 22nd May, 1899.

LONDON LETTER.

11th May, 1899

FINANCIAL.

The rush of prospectuses shows a big diminution for the month of April. Thirty-three new companies or loans were registered, with a capital-total of slightly over sixty-four million dollars. The total for March, it will be remembered, was 66 issues and over 103 million dollars. Had it not been for new issues of capital, etc., made by existing joint stock concerns, during April, the total would have still further decreased.

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Amongst the loans last month, the City of Liverpool figures in an interesting fashion. A year ago, last January, the Corporation of that city essayed to borrow \$7,500,000 at a minimum price of 98 per cent. The interest yield was a guaranteed 2 1-2 per cent. In reply, the public took up barely one-third of the issue. Last month the corporation had an attempt to get in the five million still required. A fresh loan bearing the same interest was floated and just subscribed, but at an average price of only 93 1-2 per cent. A few 2 3-4 per cent municipal loans were barely got rid of at 97 per cent.

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In showy contrast has been the reception of the Trust certificates of the Immigration Investment Corporation of Egypt. These yield nearly 4 per cent., are secured by the deposit Egyptian Government pay warrants, and were subscribed 26 times over.