passage of the same, by a number of companies. The evils of inflation were thus constantly exposed and the public was in no mood to listen to new industrial propositions or mergers, notwithstanding the extraordinary ease in money. A stock market early in the year so despondent that even the strongest railroads resorted to temporary note issues to high rates rather than attempt the sale of permanent securities was obviously unsuited for the financing of industrial propositions. The outcome of companies previously organized, moreover, had a conservative effect upon owners of plants, who showed little disposition to yield to offers of huge stock bonuses. Such incidents as the shipbuilding exposure inevitably increased the prevailing prejudice against new consolidation projects. Thus it will be seen that all the surroundings of the situation were against industrial mergers. It must be conceded, however, that there has been a marked improvement in industrial conditions recently, which improvement originated with the iron and steel industry and has gradually spread.

MANUFACTURERS' LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

Mr. E. S. Miller, who recently resigned his position as provincial manager, at Montreal, for the Imperial Life, has been appointed Superintendent of Agencies of the Manufacturers' Life, with headquarters in Montreal, and will, for the present, devote his energies to the Province of Quebec. The Manufacturers' Life had a very prosperous year in their Canadian business for the year 1904.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

NEW TAXES.—The City Council is still struggling with the problem of raising more revenue by additional taxation, for the solution of which a number of schemes have been proposed. We should like to see the aldermen facing this question seriously, and dealing with it boldly. It is too important a matter to be dealt with in a picayune spirit.

We have often said, and still affirm, that the present system, in our opinion, after studying the taxation of other municipalities, is, from many standpoints, the most equitable and the least intricate of any city we know of. Why not let well alone, as far as new rates or taxes are concerned, and decide to place an extra tax on real estate, which would benefit real estate owners more by increasing the value of their properties by providing funds for good roads and sidewalks, than the extra taxation would amount to.

We are satisfied that submitting a scheme of various extra taxes to the ratepayers at large, except on certain conditions, would result in class discrimination.

Naturally, each ratepayer would vote for any new tax from the direct incidence of which he would be exempt. Fancy, for instance, what the result would be of submitting an extra tax on banks, and other financial institutions, or, on organized capital in any form, to the general body of ratepayers. Such a proposal would secure an overwhelming majority, yet such a tax might, indeed would, in the long run, be highly injurious to the best interests of this city.

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FIRE LOSSES.—The year 1904 closed without any fire loss of any special significance in the Dominion. The New Year, however, opened with a fire of considerable dimensions at Brockville, which will involve a loss of probably $150,000 to the companies The last few days of the old years are generally anxious ones for the fire underwriters. Judging from statements made by officials of various Life Companies, it is evident that large advances have been made during the past year by some of the Life Offices. The figures presented by the United States giants are astounding.

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THE AMALGAMATION, or consolidation of four Canadian cotton manufacturing companies, is a change in the industrial situation. This does not effect a complete monopoly of the business in Canada, as two companies remain out of the arrangement, which are understood to be independent. The companies appear to have been over-capitalized, and in such a business as cotton-making, where the margin between cost and selling price is fractional, there must be the strictest economy to earn a fair return on invested capital. Cotton mill machinery is very expensive, it is constantly needing repairs, new adjustments, and outlays, so that capital must be economically handled in this business, if it is to earn dividends. The re-organization of the cotton companies will, we trust, prove a great success in every respect.

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A TOPIC THREATENING TO become more prominent than agreeable, is the internal condition of Russia. An event of profound significance was the recent mutiny of the entire Black Sea fleet at Sebastopol, which escaped notice by the daily papers. The men on eighteen ships of the Russian navy flung discipline to the winds, treated threats of punishment with derision, and inflicted corporal punishment upon a number of the naval officers. The windows in all the officers' quarters were smashed, and the barracks of the garrison were damaged. The soldiers called to put down this mutiny, fired in the air when ordered to fire on the rioters. The 14,000 marines, stokers and others, at Sebastopol threatened to scuttle the whole fleet, if their demands were not complied with.