

## LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

State Insurance Official attempts to find out how much money Life Insurance companies have contributed "to influence legislation"—Kansas as a Freak Field—Two more Insurance Papers in the States—The Troubles of the New York Tariff Association approaching solution?—The Lincoln Fire Insurance Company in a Tangle already!—"Satellites" likely to be Eclipsed—Is the "Dun Building" absolutely fire proof?—"An Actuary living in New York City" frees his mind to McNall of Kansas on a rather important Matter—The Moore & Evans Taxation Project, and some lines concerning it, by Mr. Donald A. Campbell, of London—Again, the "Hillmon Case."

## Editor CHRONICLE:

What will be the final outcome of the proceedings instituted and carried out as far as possible by the present Superintendent of Insurance of the State of Kansas may well be classed among modern insurance problems. He does not seem to weaken a particle, but on the contrary gets more overbearing with every day that passes. His proposition to demand details regarding the salaries paid to company officials and to require them as well to tell him how much money they have spent or contributed to influence legislation in the State of Kansas, and how much each "contributed to the Republican campaign," are regarded as good samples of official insolence. If the companies contributed anything to the Populist's campaign in Kansas, what then? On that score Mr. McNall is, and no doubt will continue to be, a Sphinx. If by some miracle he could be transformed into a silent mate for the Great Unheard near the pyramid of Cheops, it would be quiet and peaceful out in Kansas until some other curiosity somehow got into the insurance department. There have been several already. Freaks are a specific production of that curious state.

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The onward and (likely to be upward) march of the new insurance journal interests in the States does not seem to lag very perceptibly. Two new ones are said to have been recently started down South, in Atlanta, Ga., I believe, one named the *Southern Insurance Recorder* and the other the *Flash Lights*. I have not seen a copy of either, and can only speak of them by what I have seen in other insurance newspapers. It would seem as if there were as many insurance newspapers and periodicals now published over here as are at all necessary, but it is evident that there are some unoccupied gentlemen who think differently. If they have plenty of leisure (and money) they can certainly print papers. But if they know nothing of underwriting practices it is sixteen to one that they will finally fail. It requires specific knowledge to publish and edit an insurance journal I should judge.

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"The New York Tariff Association" has been a latterly more or less disturbed body, one of the elements of discord being a question of rates on rated risks. This trouble has been bridged over at its last meeting by the passage of a resolution "to refer to a joint committee, consisting of the executive committee and the committee on rates (with power) all questions on rated risks, including the power to abolish and restore them." Another resolution was unanimously passed: "That no more than twenty five per cent. commission be paid on unrated business." The brokers are the naggers in the Association's troubles, and are charged with a desire to break up the organization.

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There is some likelihood of serious trouble soon in the management of the newly organized "Lincoln Fire Insurance Company" of this city. Mr. J. C. Hatie at one time prominently connected with the Mutual Fire (Mr. Armstrong's creation, now the Manhattan, and presided over by Mr. Armstrong), who afterward attempted to start another company (life) but failed

in getting it into harness, organized the Lincoln, or was among those who did, has resigned from the company as general manager, being succeeded by Mr. C. E. Carley. Mr. Hatie is directing an attack upon Mr. Carley, and as the former is full of fighting blood battle royal will ensue if the latter is anything like him: r is backed by a competent force.

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The subject of underwriters' agencies, or "Satellites," as the Massachusetts Commissioner has named them, is one that is receiving more or less attention now at the hands of the insurance editors on this side. A prominent insurance journal here refers to them as "the annexes, the postscripts, the duplicities, or whatever else they may be called," and suggests that they be known as "repeaters," which seems quite appropriate under the circumstances. As far as I have access to them I do not find the majority of insurance editors upholding the idea. Most of them condemn openly or maintain a discreet silence from motives of their own (probably based upon the counting-room of their plant) which it is not for others to question amid ordinary surroundings. Business rivalry is at the foundation of the "Satellite" idea, and, like war, there are those who believe that "anything and everything is fair in business." This is not good morals, but "it is good business." It is for the future to determine what the output will amount to.

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A description of the new "Dun Building" (R. G. Dun & Co.), just erected here on Broadway and Reade Sts., says: "The building is fifteen stories and attic, of steel construction and absolutely fire proof throughout, even the wood, often a menace to a building, being rendered absolutely fire proof by the process of the Electric Fireproofing Co." The Chief of the New York Fire department, Hugh Bonner, says there is not an absolutely fireproof building in New York City. He must have escaped the "Dun Building" in his explorations for one.

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"An actuary living in New York City" is said to have addressed a letter to Kansas superintendent of insurance containing the following assertions pertaining to the attempt on the superintendent's part to get information from the insurance companies as to the amount of money they have spent for legislation: "You will find by asking that the companies never spend any money for legislative purposes direct. They will all answer that they have spent none. The way you want to get at them is to ask how much they contribute each year to the pool maintained in New York City. Possibly you can get at the matter that way. The fact is, the companies have formed a pool, and they dump their corruption money into a common fund. This is handled by expert lobbyists. The companies do not use money direct. It is always done through this channel." This is "important, if true." It is certain that the Kansas official will make the most of it that he possibly can. He is reported to have said "if such a pool is in existence I propose to uncover it." He may be equal to such a task ("if such a pool is in existence" at all), but he will have a large contract on his hands when he essays a job like that. He will run across more know-nothings than he has ever dreamed had been born.

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The bill now before the legislature of this state, having for its purpose the taxation of foreign fire insurance companies, five per cent. on their gross income, while letting off the home companies with a tax of two and a half upon their net profit, if I understand it correctly, is a pet measure of the president and vice-president of the Continental Fire Insurance Company of this city, Messrs. Moore & Evans. It is not likely to become a law. A witty fellow who signs himself "Donald A. Campbell" prints a jingle of five verses in the *Post Magazine and Insurance Monitor* of January 17, called the "Lilt of the Tarring Commissioners," the last verse of which runs thus: