Canadian Items.

The Canadian cement amalgamation has a good deal of interest for us here, in view of the fact that our own cement industry is in a very languishing condition. The principal undertaking, the Associated Portland Cement Company, a combination of Kent and Essex manufacturers, is a huge and unwieldy concern, with a capital of about 6 3-4 millions. It has always had a struggle to keep its head above water and on nearly 2 millions of ordinary capital, no dividend has ever been paid. Not being in a fit condition to meet new competition, the dominant cement interests here do not view Canada's possible entry into the international field with any degree of enthusiasm.

For the time being the new issue market is quiescent, but there are rumours of several important approaching new issues. Among them, doubtless, will be the Manitoba 4 per cents., £200,000 of which, we hear, have been secured by British financiers at par.

Bondholders of the Imperial Paper Mills of Canada and of the Northern Sulphite Mills of Canada, have agreed this week to offer the two properties for sale together, the proceeds of the sale to be divided between the bondholders of the two concerns in certain proportions. The receiver has found it impossible to sell the two properties separately, but is now in touch with various interests, who, it is said, contemplate making an offer for the combined properties.

Insurance News.

The London County Council *inter alia* runs its own fire insurance accounts, and appears to have had a satisfactory experience in the year ending March last. The amount of insurances undertaken was raised by over half a million to £12,640,928, and there were practically no losses during the year. Funds in hand reach £77,397, which does not appear to be any too much.

Ptomaine poisoning has now been made an insurable risk by an old established British office. The policy is designed to protect retail grocers, £1,000 damage and all law costs incurred in resisting a claim being covered by a premium of 15s. with an additional charge of 1s. 6d. on account of each assistant employed.

The scheme for a drapers' insurance company, to which reference was made in these columns some time ago, appears to be progressing. A start is to be made in October, the authorized capital being £250,000 and paid up £50,000. The company will work on non-tariff lines, but, its promoters state, will not cut rates, although it is hoped to give rebates later on when a satisfactory reserve fund has been accumulated. There is a touch of humour about the statement of one of the organizers who told a newspaper man that he thought there was no necessity to secure the services of "titled" directors; "practical business men" would be preferred.

Lloyd's underwriters have had a very bad week. The wreck of the "Maori" off the South African coast is a loss of £160,000; and that of the "Langton Grange," £61,000.

METRO.

London, 7th August, 1909.

General Financial Situation.

EUROPE'S UNRUFFLED FINANCIAL CENTRES.

New York Stock Market's Irregularity—Comparative Steadiness of Canadian Market Strength—Rise in Canadian Bank Stocks.

The financial markets of Europe have continued to present an unruffled exterior during the past week—Monday's gold arrivals at London from the Cape amounted to $3,500,000. About two-thirds of this sum went into the Bank of England, and the balance to the Continent. Bank rate at the three capitals—London, Paris and Berlin—is the same as a week ago, viz., 2½, 3, and 3½ per cent. Call money in the London market is given at ½ to ¾; short bills, 1¼ to 1⅜; and three months bills 1 7-16 to 1½—which is practically the level obtaining last week for all three classes of paper. The Paris market also is the same—at 1 3-16—and the Berlin market stands at 2 1-8 per cent.

In New York the firmness of the money market has increased. Call loans appear to be pretty definitely established at 2 1-4 per cent. for the present; and time money grows steadily stronger. 60 days, 2¾ to 3; 90 days, 3¼ to 3½; and six months, 4 per cent. It is said that a number of New York Stock Exchange houses have been seeking accommodation in Philadelphia in the last ten days. Their appearance in the Quaker City resulted in a rise in interest rates there.

In spite of the rapid rise in prices of a few particular stocks, there appears to have been considerable liquidation, on the whole, last week in Wall Street. At any rate, the loans of the Clearing House banks were reduced $5,200,000, according to the Saturday statement. Cash fell $4,800,000; and the net result was a decrease of $2,100,000 in the surplus, bringing it down to $22,715,575. Though the amount is said to be not unseasonably low, it hardly seems to contain the wherewithal to finance an excited boom in stocks, such as many enthusiastic speculators are evidently expecting to continue. More recent stock market developments brought continued price reaction since midweek. Harriman issues were affected by conflicting reports as to the returning magnate's health.

Is the Public Entering Wall Street?

The practical realization of magnificent crops has served to attract to the securities market a great deal of attention from every part of the country. Brokers in New York city report that new customers are getting quite plentiful and that they come from everywhere. The public has been somewhat slow in "coming in," on this occasion. If their influx increases, the later comers will be used to make good the paper profits of the more experienced parties who foresaw their coming.

Call loans in Canada are quoted at 4 and 4½ per cent. Mercantile loans and time loans rule at about the former level. Rates for these latter vary considerably. So far as the stock markets in Montreal and Toronto are concerned it must be said that the speculative fraternity has not allowed New York's example to excite it into making wild demonstrations. But, of course, the continuation through the fall and winter of a very