place it serves. Chimneys should always be built from the cellar and with a well-fitted iron door at the bottom. But negligence may make the cellar chute a source of danger, as was recently shown in an Ohio city.

Epigrams by J. L. Cunningham.—It may be a mistake to go into the insurance business too young, but it is not likely to be often repeated by the same individual.

The closer money is, the more difficult it is to get it.

Sins of commission do not always show in agents' accounts.

Report your new risks to your companies, not to your competitors.

Talk is cheap when you use the next-door telephone.

Time is money, for money can be borrowed on time—with other collateral.

Some are good because it pays, and some are good for nothing.

The Agency Force an Asset.—In an address before Life Underwriters' Association of Massachusetts, the President, Mr. J. H. Holcombe, dwelt upon the agency force of a life company being one of its assets. The point is sound enough, just as it is correct to estimate the healthy constitution of a man amongst "his" assets. The trouble is that assets of this class are inconvertible into cash or anything of cash value. Mr. Holcombe said, as reported in The "Standard:" A company to perform its best service, must have a corps of agents who shall go about, and having educated the public as to the functions of life insurance, explain to them not only what the institution can do for them, but what his own particular company can perform. The agent's work is one of education, and is one in which while he is earning his own living, he is doing a service to his fellow men, and he is not only doing this, but he is also benefiting the policyholders of his own company by adding to their number, broadening the basis of their business, and aiding in that growth which will bring better returns to all concerned. The best results are produced by a corps of agents who are not only harmonious among themselves, but between whom and the home office there exists the most cordial feelings of confidence and friendship. A corps of this kind is necessarily a matter of growth. It takes years and the expenditure of much money to establish a thoroughly efficient and harmonious body of agents, but when this is done, the results will justify the time, labour and expense.

"My belief, therefore, is that to the ordinary assets of a life insurance company, there may be added the value of its agency force, and that so far as the efficiency of the company is concerned, and the results which it can give to its policy-holders, this is as truly an asset as any other item which is set forth in the printed statements."

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

LONDON LETTER.

London, Eng., March 2, 1905.

Finance.

More and more sensational becomes the advance in Hudson's Bays on the London Stock Exchange. At the time of writing $370 has been bid for the $50 shares. Most remarkable stories are in circulation. I have seen a private cable from Canada which has been handed round a few people in the market, where it is alleged that upon the basis of a proper valuation of the company's assets the shares are worth $2,500 each. Some exaggeration must be allowed for here, but a valuation of $500 is certainly not out of the way. A setback from the present bound is of course likely, but that the shares will soon resume their upward course is easily reasonable.

It is long since I began to tell of the future before these shares in these columns, when they were very little more than a third of the present price, and the great advance is as gratifying to the prophet as it is to the strong believer in the great future wealth of Canada generally.

At many of the half-yearly meetings of bank shareholders which have been held here recently, complaints have been made about the new policy inaugurated by many municipalities of inviting savings deposits to be used for municipal purposes, better terms being offered to depositors than are given by the local banking establishments. The question has reached a critical stage in Edinburgh. There, by way of an endeavour to choke off the competition the Scotch banks, a fortnight ago, raised the rate for loans to public bodies which competed with them for ordinary deposit money.

So far from curing the evil, this course of action has only precipitated the appearance of a crisis. The Edinburgh Town Council promptly convened a special meeting to consider the new position of affairs. The first retaliatory step decided upon was that the town's business should no longer be given to the local banks in a prescribed rotation, but that the Town Treasurer should be free to go where he could get the best terms.

This was only one thing decided. Another was a recommendation that Parliament should be asked to grant powers for the issue of an additional $2,500,000 of promissory notes, the plain meaning of this being that the competition complained of was going to be carried on more vigorously than ever.

But the end cannot be far away. The municipalities cannot borrow money at a higher rate of interest than a bank can and still keep a sufficient sum in hand to supply depositors who make a legitimate demand for their money. The municipalities rely upon getting spare cash from a neighbouring bank in case of need. The suffering banker therefore very kindly keeps part of his own deposit locked up in order that the competing municipality shall be freed from the necessity of locking up part of the deposits it has received from the public. Being able to use profitably therefore the whole of the money deposited with them, the municipalities can naturally pay a higher rate of interest to citizen lenders. It will surely not take our bankers long to see how foolishly they make a competitor possible.

Insurance.

The persistent search for new areas of business is leading many British companies to make a special effort to interest women in life assurance. One company has recently joined in the endeavour with a scheme of what is pleasantly called retiring allowances for women workers, professional and otherwise. A small annual premium of, for young women, about eleven dollars is charged, and in return $100 is paid should she die before reaching the age of 55. Should she live, however, until that age, as she reasonably may, she receives a "retiring allowance" of $500. By paying a small extra premium she obtains the right, in the event of incapacity or marriage intervening, to have returned three-quarters of all the premiums paid.

The essence of the scheme seems to reside very largely in the excellent way it is drafted and printed. Folded like a British bankers pass-book, it is just the charming production to catch a woman's eye.

The writing down of Consols to 85 and 87 1-2 this time