

PROMINENT TOPICS.

The Knights of Pythias Friendly Society is in trouble over a large defalcation by one of its officers. It is reported that a loss is likely to occur of half a million dollars, probably this is exaggerated, for, loosely as some of these societies are managed, it is incredible that one or two officials would have \$500,000 at their command to invest or speculate with. The Knights of Pythias, according to the Ontario "Inspector of Insurance," claimed on 31st Dec., 1899 to have insurance in force for \$108,098,500, the certificates numbering 60,309. In Ontario the total membership was 1,154, and the insurance benefits paid in 1899 were \$11,000, and sick benefits \$1,541. The total assets in Ontario at end of 1899 were \$273, and liabilities \$155. The collapse of this society will therefore affect very few persons in Canada, though it will create distrust in similar organizations whose life insurance schemes have reached enormous proportions in the United States which are regarded unfavourably by actuaries.

The source of the trouble to the Pythians appears to have been the very common one in societies of this class, that is, entrusting large funds for investment to officers who are wholly without experience in such business. The officers upon whom falls this responsibility, are elected because of their personal popularity in the Lodge or Court rooms. An agreeable address and readiness in conducting the ceremonial, are sure passports to these responsibilities, which, for their wise discharge, demand a special kind of financial experience, familiarity with, and judgment in valuing securities, accompanied with strict business habits in keeping the accounts and records required, in order to have investments in perfect order. Such qualifications are not found in the mere amateurs who are usually in charge of the funds and accounts of friendly societies. To save the salary of competent officials, the friendly societies too commonly entrust their finances to those who, however estimable otherwise, have not the qualifications for such onerous and responsible duties.

The delay in the Census is developing into a scandal. The United Kingdom Census and that of the United States are each complete, yet the Canadian returns are not likely to be published for two months. It is to be hoped that no such incidents will arise as have done in connection with the American returns. There is one man under sentence, and several awaiting trial for falsifying the figures for political purposes. They added names to the schedules so as to raise the population of a locality high enough to secure increased representation. The frauds were discovered and the enumerators

at once placed under arrest, one having been fined heavily and sent to jail for a year.

The Terminal Railway proposal, having been rejected by the City Council, though illegally it is alleged, should move the Street Railway Company to make easier connections with the suburban line which is desirous of getting into the city. The trip to Bout de l'Isle is doubtless very popular and capable of developing very much larger traffic than it enjoys at present. Were the connections made close and regular and some understanding arrived at for through and return tickets from any part of the city, the Street Railway Company and the Terminal would each increase its receipts and profits. The public hate any break in a trip of pleasure, it is exceedingly annoying to women and children, and not without danger. Their mutual interests and the convenience of a large body of seekers of fresh air would be materially served by the City line and the Terminal working together amicably until some permanent arrangement is made.

A special meeting of the City Council was held on 10th inst., at which it was expected that the contract for lighting the city would be awarded at a low figure to the Royal Electric. After fruitless discussion the question was postponed until September, when new tenders will be called for. It is hardly right to leave a contract of this nature hung up for a needless length of time. If any further postponements occur the delay will practically shut off outside competition.

The usual rumours are current respecting the bribery of Aldermen. The caution against judging others is very generally ignored by the citizens in regard to their representatives. One Alderman is said to have been offered \$3,000 for his vote on the light contract. Who the simpleton was who made such a spectacle of himself by this offer had perhaps better be kept secret, as probably he was a victim of the heat which may have affected his brains.

The police procession through the city was a brave show, they were well set up; walked in good military style and appeared quite capable of keeping the citizens in proper order. The parade was a revelation to many who had no idea the police were so numerous or comprised so many fine looking men.

Preparations for the royal reception are proceeding. The flower show is very much and universally approved by the citizens; it would be a charming feature in the reception programme.