if rates were put down ½ p.c. at any time. Commercial discounts are from 6 to 7 p.c.

Bank of England rate is held at 5 p.c.; and the Bank of France and Imperial Bank of Germany also adhere to the same 5 p.c. quotation. Call money in London is 1 p.c.; short bills are 1½ to 1 9-16 p.c.; three months' bills, 1½ to 1 9-16 p.c. It is said that Austria is making heavy demands on the German gold supply. Germany has no choice other than to give up gold to her two allies if she wishes to keep them actively co-operating with her.

NEW YORK POSITION.

Call loans in New York ranged from 1⅞ to 2 p.c. Time money has been very quiet: sixty days, 2½ p.c.; ninety days, 2½ to 3 p.c.; six months, 3¼ to 3½ p.c. The clearing house banks in New York improved their position slightly in regard to excess reserve. Their loans increased $21,000,000, but on the other hand aggregate reserves increased $5,500,000 and bank note circulation decreased $1,100,000. The excess reserve increased $1,200,000, and now stands at $144,259,000. The changes in position of the more important federal reserve banks were not very great—the New York institution shows decrease of nearly $5,000,000 in cash and deposits respectively.

A news item in one of the leading New York financial papers stated that it was quite likely that the warrants issued against the recent loan of $25,000,000 made to Russia by American bankers will be so arranged as to be available as investments for the federal reserve banks. The New York Evening Post thus refers to the matter, "Inasmuch as the warrants will be against specific purchases of supplies for shipment abroad, they will belong to the class of paper which the reserve banks, under the law, are allowed to rediscount, or to purchase after they have been duly accepted by a member bank." Presumably one or more of the larger national banks in New York will accept this paper on behalf of the Russian Government.

ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY.

Mr. William Mackay, manager for Canada, Royal Insurance Company, informs us that the Company has opened a branch office for the Pacific Coast at Vancouver, B.C., under the management of Mr. Fred. Walker, formerly joint manager of the Winnipeg Branch. Mr. J. H. Labelle, assistant manager, has been in Vancouver for some days supervising the opening of the branch, and four members of the staff at the Head Office for Canada have been sent to Vancouver.

The policy of the Royal in opening a branch for the Pacific Coast, is no doubt caused by its increasingly important business in that section.

Fire Chief Thompson, of Toronto, has resigned. It is probable that a thorough re-organisation of the department will be made.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

The life insurance record of 1914 has become history, and so far as we may judge of the details of that record at this moment does not differ materially in several important features from that of 1913, so far at least as the business on this continent is concerned. It is a significant fact that, notwithstanding the great financial depression prevailing, a good many of the companies have secured a volume of new business equal or almost equal to that of the previous year, one or two have exceeded it, and those falling behind still have a record which is not at all discourging. This fact shows to what extent the life insurance idea has taken hold of the people, and that in an era of "hard times" men have come to appreciate the value of life insurance protection sufficiently to make sacrifices to obtain it. While many manufacturing and commercial interests have been almost paralyzed, legitimate life insurance is as strong as ever and presents an unbroken front, without the wavering of a single company. The present financial disturbance only serves to bring out more clearly the fact that life insurance does not build for a single year but for all time.

DEFECTIVE METHODS.

This leads us to say that the more's the pity that an institution so great and strong in its beneficence should continue to be burdened by methods of administration which embody elements of weakness. The readers of THE CHRONICLE. will have scanned its pages to little purpose if they have failed to see a frequent pointing out of these elements of weakness from time to time. Of the various evils of rebates and abnormal expenses, of unfair comparisons and misleading statistics and returns, we have spoken in no uncertain way. As we stand at the beginning of 1915, looking backward and striving to look forward, the pertinent and important question which naturally presents itself to all thoughtful minds is: What are the prospects for reform in the use of questionable and weakening methods? Will the objectionable branches which disfigure the life insurance tree be lopped off? There are welcome indications that the pruning knife may be wielded to some purpose in the not too distant future. Managers are beginning to realise that business can still be paid for too dearly, and that the keeping of expenses and cost of management down to a reasonable figure is an important element in the permanent success of a life company, and one upon which too little stress has in the past been laid.

In view of the increase in its business, so that additional assistance is required, Mr. J. C. McKown has been appointed an additional Assistant Secretary of the St. Paul Fire & Marine Insurance Company. Mr. McKown has been with the St. Paul since 1888.