The effect of emitting electrical discharges for the purposes of wireless telegraphy is affirmed by the highest scientific authorities to be a matter for very serious consideration.

These powerful discharges of electricity into the air, from a wireless telegraphy station where they spread in every direction, are comparable to miniature flashes of lightning. They are regarded by most eminent scientists of the day as a highly probable addition to the risks of fire. Indeed, one distinguished expert, to whom wireless telegraphy was a study years before Mr. Marconi took it up for commercial purposes, affirms that, the additional fire risk from a wireless telegraphy station is not a *probability* but a decided *certainty*.

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A new service of electricity which has in it "the promise and potency," as Tyndal said, of incalculable benefits to railway companies and the travelling public, is the application of electricity to the head lights of locomotives. A test made on the St. Paul road showed that such a light was visible a mile ahead, indeed, a beam of light thrown from a searchlight was visible at ten miles distant so that the position of a train hidden by curves or cuttings could be shown by throwing a beam of light vertically. It is considered feasible for signals to be arranged by using coloured glass shades, by which device warnings might be given to trains at such a considerable distance as to prevent accidents. Nearly all the accidents last month could have been avoided had trains been provided with electric head lights. The installation of such a system would entail heavy outlays but the saving effected by reducing accidents would bring a handsome return, besides being an inestimable boon to the companies' servants and the public.

LIFE INSURANCE IN CANADA FOR YEAR 1902.

On the opposite page we publish a table of the life insurance business in Canada in the year 1902, with comparisons of year 1901 and 1900. For the data from which the table was compiled we are indebted to the managers of the various companies courtesy in furnishing the information is gratefully appreciated, as it has been in many previous years.

As two of the Canadian companies have not sent in their figures, the total net premiums, policies new and taken up, and total assurance in force, are subject to correction. Sixteen Canadian companies enlarged their premium receipt and business written and in force last year. The amount of total premiums received was $10,477,902, against $9,115,277 in 1901, the increase being $1,362,625.

The amount of policies new and taken up was $48,769,464, compared with $38,148,496 in previous year and the total assurance in force at close of 1902 amounted lo $319,969,819, which is an increase of $36,035,575 over 1902.

NATIONAL SURETY COMPANY, OF NEW YORK

The statement of this Company shows a net income from premiums of $760,868, and from interest and other sources $45,787, the total being $806,656, exclusive of Trust Funds. For losses there was paid $217,634; for expenses, $474,848, making together $692,482, which left a balance of $114,173 over losses and expenses, from which was paid $50,000 in dividends to stockholders, being 10 per cent. on the capital of $500,000. The liabilities were: claims in process of adjustment $78,444 total unearned premiums per State Law $374,673, Trust Funds and others liabilities $115,035, the aggregate being $568,154, which, added to the capital, makes $1,068,154. As the assets are stated to be $1,613,727 there is a net surplus $545,572. We note that, of the assets the sum of $982,602 consists of New York and Brooklyn City bonds, $67,490 United States Government bonds.

Notes and Items.

At Home and Abroad.

THE ROYAL BANK opened a branch in Toronto on 2nd inst., under temporary charge of Mr. Brock, the Inspector.

MR. RALPH PRICE HARDY, the eminent Actuary, is to advise the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia upon the conversion of the various State loans.

OTTAWA CLEARING HOUSE.—Total for week ending January 29, 1903, clearings, $1,618,736. Corresponding week last year, $1,251,117.

A BRANCH OF THE ONTARIO BANK has been opened in the town of Trenton, under the management of Mr. B. H. Siddall, formerly Accountant at Lindsay Branch.

RETAILING COLD AIR.—A Baltimore company is preparing to distribute supplies of cold air throughout that city, through underground pipes. Such a service would be appreciated in this city in summer; at present cold air is at a discount.

A PROPOSAL TO ARBITRATE INSURANCE RATES has been published by an American senator. He would have a public arbitrator appointed, say the "Superintendent of Insurance," upon whom would devolve the duty of settling all disputes *re* insurance rates between property owners and insurance companies. Fancy the life such an arbitrator would lead, and the fate of an insurance company manager when every policyholder could compel him to submit the rate charged to arbitration! Crankism seems to be developed in the legislative halls of the United States.