

Company (the largest industrial insurance company in America and the second largest in the world), whose president has informed the field forces concerning those who desire to enlist: "The insurance of such persons in the Metropolitan is not prejudiced, either in the ordinary department (including intermediate) or in the industrial department, even though there be a restrictive clause in the policy. Our policy-holders, are entirely free to enlist in either the army or the navy, and, in the event of death as the result thereof, the claims will be promptly paid. What may be the companies action in the event of a continuance of hostilities, as to new policies issued after a certain future date (of which the company will give due notice) is at present undetermined. But, until such notice is given, any policy holder is free to join the army or navy without prejudice to his insurance, and when such notice is given it will only relate to new insurance thereafter affected."

The question of National Supervision of insurance in the United States will not down and out, although it down temporarily with a good deal of frequency. It was to have a hearing on the 19th of this month in Washington before the Senate Inter-State Commerce Committee, but was shunted aside again until the last month in the year, when it may get a chance or it may not.

NEW YORK, April 23rd, 1898.

J. H. BIMBA.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

(Special to the CHRONICLE.)

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FINANCIAL.

Lipton still looms largely in the industrial market, and brisk selling is recorded on the part of the little men—the people who were allotted from five to twenty shares. The price is down considerably, although still at a premium, and no betterment will set in until these small fry are cleared out.

The proposed manufacture by J. & P. Coats, the great sewing-cotton combine, of a new thread to compete the Belgian and German threads out of the market is having a good effect upon the prices of their stock in the House. The immense importation of these continental cheap and nasty cottons is a great danger to our own sewing-cotton industry, and needs to be counteracted by a master stroke.

The fraternity of the "blind pool," who live by plundering foolish and avaricious speculators, are forming what may be called an "annexe." In fact, such a term has an extra meaning which is extremely appropriate in the case of these fishers of men. The new move is to circularize shareholders and investors, getting the names from the company-lists filed at Somerset House, and offer for sale batches of shares in some concern. These shares are often not worth the paper they are transferred on. For instance, a Claude *Audain* is hawking round 175 fully paid shares in the Strand Musical Magazine, Ltd., a concern with which Sir George *Hewnes*, of "Tü-Bits," ceased connection some time back, dropped like a hot coal in fact. Claude promises that these shares will yield 35%, if only the sale passes a certain figure, and, just to clear, offers them at a discount of 2½%. The small speculator, who has an unshakable belief in the philanthropy of the outside broker, will be badly bitten if he accepts these shady bargains.

Baron Leitenberg, the well known Bohemian financier, is reported to be organizing a combination of the calico printers of Bohemia, a couple of businesses having been secured for a start. In Scotland, also, the trust movement exhibits some activity. The bolt and rivet makers are confabulating, and desire to take measures to collectively resist the victorious march of the English firms over the Scotch markets.

Through all the deep mutterings of international discord, Consols have preserved an equable and firm position. Standing

now at 111, they are only a very few points below the best, and yield over two per cent. These have been apparently helped by the buying which has followed upon sales of speculative stocks.

Argentina's new loan for \$30,000,000 is a smart move, coming as it does as a patriotic proposal during the anti-Chili ferment. Its success is certain.

It is thought over here that the Grand Trunk does not come out quite so well at it might from the rate war debates. Some of its arguments in defence are not found convincing. The threat of the Canadian Pacific to build its own route from Sudbury to Toronto is regarded here more seriously than the Grand Trunk affects to regard it. Prices fluctuate accordingly.

Fresh breaks and rallies are the daily companions of Spanish securities, but upon the whole their position is not so bad as it might easily be.

Rhodes' arrival has not had the effect upon the mining market that it would have had some years back. Business is very slack, for which state of things the present political strain and stress is responsible.

Home Rails, which were just careering upward all the way round, have received a sudden check by the declaration of hostilities by the South Wales miners.

INSURANCE.

Although the Palatine's premium income for 1897 shows a decrease from the last year's, as the last year's did from the year before, it has been owing to a cancellation or reduction of certain reinsurance treaties and a better selection of risks. Now that the reductions are working themselves out, a better loss ratio makes itself evident. The expenses of management were \$274,080, commissions \$917,680, and net premium income \$3,451,885. The accident branch shows a slight increase in income. A 7½% dividend eats up \$102,000 and \$1,113,765 is carried forward. The Palatine occupies a front seat, and has earned it by steady hard work and commendable generosity.

Liverpool's marine underwriters are not exactly in favour amongst their Metropolitan brethren at present. It is alleged against them that they scramble for business at any rates and all the while are amongst the shrillest in the "keep the rates up" chorus. A reason for this, pronounced by a well-known gentleman at Lloyds', is the desire to prevent the shareholders perceiving a diminished income, and thereupon demanding a thorough investigation right the way through.

The American steamship "Paris" left Southampton with cover at about 175% against war risk specially. The rate against the "China" being a total loss has varied considerably, standing now at sixty guineas. There are high hearts at Lloyds' this week as a large number of overdue vessels have been sighted or spoken.

I should like to see the Insurances' Corporation make an advance. An affair which could survive the incubus of a promoter like Thos. Fenwick must have some good stuff in it. The first annual report, a copy of which has just come into my possession, is an interesting record of a fight in the face of unusual difficulties. The paid up capital is \$88,025, the nominal \$5,000,000. Incoming during the year from premiums was \$20,000, and first losses only \$1,500. Then came the Cripple Gate fire, which will cost the Corporation nearly \$9,000, and I see that they have also dropped \$2,500 over a Glasgow blaze this last week. Heavy law charges in connection with the "Promoter" weighs down the report as also do preliminary business expenses. R. Cooper, the secretary, points out, however, the fact that all fire companies look for 95% of renewals, and shows a good prospect of increasing stability.

The Manchester Warehousemen of the City of London are making preparations to form a syndicate to insure their own risks. Special insurance of this kind will go crash. Anyhow the offices will not be concerned at losing dry goods' land.