

PERSONALS.

MR. W. B. PATERSON, of the Norwich Union Life Office, sailed yesterday by the "S.S. California" for Great Britain.

MR. HARRY STIKEMAN, General Manager of the Bank of British North America, started yesterday for the Pacific coast, on an official visit to the branches of the bank, and will probably be absent from Montreal until the end of October.

MR. AND MRS. G. B. BURLAND arrived in Montreal a few days ago, from two months of holiday-making in England.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by Correspondent

LONDON LETTER.

7th September, 1898.

FINANCE.

The languor that has prevailed during August in the promoting business in the City has been quite as exceptional as was the extreme briskness of business in July. The figures giving the total amount of capital on loan, asked for, during July and August, for the last three years, are as follows:—

	1896.	1897.	1898.
July.....	\$150,912,900	\$164,159,550	\$233,261,220
August.....	25,110,000	47,066,000	13,985,400

An inclination is observed by some people to attribute the abnormal decline of the August total to Hooley and the exposures that have resulted from his bankruptcy proceedings. But I think that the real cause lies in a very simple fact. Whilst Hooley might, of course, be a very good reason for the decrease, does not the real reason lie in the fact that so many more flotations than usual were forced through in July. Every boom is followed by a slump, and as the month of July plainly witnessed a boom in company promotion, so August must feel the relapse, and, of course, when a relapse falls upon the top of the effects of holidays, an abnormal quietude is to be expected.

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The settlement of the Welsh coal strike has affected Home Rails slightly for the better, but the buying and selling of these securities is of the scantiest dimensions.

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The active stocks in the American market have slipped back somewhat. Curiously, Spanish are on the rise.

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Everywhere important public events are having less influence on the markets than would be the case at other times of the year. The Czar's pronouncements, the Dreyfus case revelations, the Cape Colony elections, have had only trifling effects on stocks. A great improvement has set in in the South African section of the Mining Market, but owing to causes other than political. De Beers' diamond shares are still rising,

and the rally is reacting favourably upon the gold mines.

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This is the season when the poorer class of Londoners snatch a chance of breathing country air for a few weeks by going "hopping." The fine weather we have been having in August and September has ripened the hops beautifully, and the pickers should be busy. Hop-growing is, however, on the downgrade in this country. This is the fourth year in succession that the acreage under hops has decreased, and, whilst fourteen years ago, there were under hops, 71,327 acres, there are now only 49,735. A yield of twenty thousand tons is expected.

There is some speculation about several rumoured bank amalgamations, and two Lancashire establishments, both with extensive clienteles, are said to be negotiating. The City Bank and the London & Midland are also alleged to be thinking of combination.

INSURANCE.

Fires and burglaries are in evidence pretty continually at this season of the year. The experts and adjusters are having a busy time.

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At Nottingham twenty thousand dollars worth of jewellery were lifted by the enterprising gentleman who come in the night. The police have no clue. They very seldom have nowadays. The list of undiscovered murders, robbers, and criminals of all kinds tends to increase in every year. Luckily, for the owner of this particular burglar establishment, he had taken out a policy in the Burglary Insurance Company, and that office will cover all the loss. It is a rather heavy sum to pay out from the necessarily relatively small funds at the disposal of such offices, but, as in the case last year, where the Security Corporation, Limited, paid out a still larger sum, it will prove a splendid advertisement all over the country.

The Imperial Life Office is fortunate in the possession of a general manager, who knows how to help his company in evidence everywhere. His last public act that came under our notice was a very effective letter in the press. This is, of course, the season for writing to the papers about whatever philosophy you possess, and we get huge quantities of matter upon all subjects from the "Prevalence of Heretic Ritualism" to the "Irreclaimability of drunkards."

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Mr. Chisholm, of the Imperial, however, deals with the philosophy of non-forfeiture, and details the treatment accorded to policies upon which the premiums are not being paid. The Imperial keeps its policies in force for the whole sum of its face-value for a year if the surrender-value is sufficient to allow this. Then, after paying the year's premium out of the surrender-value, the balance of this latter is applied to the purchase of a paid-up policy. A point arises here as to whether it is right to include the surrender-values applied to the purchase of policies as part of the new premium total as some offices do. The Imperial does not do it. To our view the point works out this way. It is not right to treat these amounts as new premiums, for the reason that whilst really newly obtained business costs a very high rate of expenses, this class of business costs next to nothing; and as a growing desire is expressed by all people to know the respective costs of new business and renewals, treatment of the kind above referred to is reactionary, as it destroys the reliability of the ratios.