

### QUERIES' COLUMN.

In order to furnish our readers with information we propose to devote this column to replies to correspondents. Letters should be addressed to "THE CHRONICLE, Enquiry Department, Montreal."

Answers will only be given to such communications as bear the writer's name, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and only to questions referring to matters of general interest in regard to which the Editor of Queries' Column will exercise his own discretion.

1540.—H. J. B., Ottawa.—The merger of the Corn Products Co., the New York Glucose Co., the Warner Sugar Refining Co. and the St. Louis Syrup & Preserving Company was consummated on the 1st of February. Two shares of stock of the Corn Products Refining Company were exchanged for three shares of stock of a like class in the Corn Products Company.

Dividends at the rate of 7 p.c. are expected to commence on the preferred stock about the time the company is ready for business.

1541.—Copper, Toronto.—The heavy demand for copper metal and the outlook for an increased requirement as time goes on make the higher grade of copper stocks attractive speculative purchases. It is impossible to estimate the immediate movement of any stock, however.

### UNITED STATES FIDELITY & GUARANTY COMPANY.

The United States Fidelity & Guaranty Company, of Baltimore, shows steady and substantial gains for the year 1905. The following comparison of some of the main items for 1905, with those for 1904 will make this plain:

	1904.	1905
Premiums written...	\$2,102,589	\$2,289,199
Premiums received in cash...	2,135,331	2,233,651
Expenses...	1,293,074	1,225,824
Losses paid...	575,719	983,428

It will be observed that the premiums show an increase of \$186,609, and the expenses a decrease of \$67,250. The total funds on hand increased last year by \$256,083 and now foot up \$3,560,880, of which over \$2,000,000 is represented by a choice list of bonds and stocks and another half million by real estate owned. The company maintain a reserve for outstanding claims amounting to \$312,398, unearned premium reserve \$1,153,070, and after providing for all other claim there is shown surplus and undivided profits of \$261,418 exclusive of the cash capital of \$1,700,000. Thus the total resources available to protect its contracts are \$3,427,485. President John R. Bland is a company builder of ability, and sets a high standard for each successive year. In Canada the affairs of the company are well managed by Mr. A. E. Kirkpatrick, of this city.

### PROMINENT TOPICS.

MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE.—Mr. F. A. Mathewson, the new president of the Board of Trade of this city, has set his mind upon securing a very large increase in the membership, to further which concessions have been made to those desirous of joining. There is ample material in this city for a Board of Trade, with a membership twice as large as the present. What is needed is to invite the attention of merchants of various classes and other business men to the advantages of a city of the magnitude of Montreal, having all its business interests fully represented on the Board of Trade, the resolution and the policy of which would carry more weight were the membership worthy of this great metropolitan city.

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ANTI-USURY BILL.—The Bill to check the abuses of usurious lenders of money fixes 12 per cent. as the maximum interest legally chargeable on loans for a less sum than \$500, which sum is regarded as the outside limit of such loans as lead to oppressive practices. Courts of law are given a certain discretion in fixing the terms on which a creditor's claim may be settled. No more than 6 p.c. can be recovered in a law court and if more than 12 p.c. has been paid by a borrower, the lender can be compelled to make restitution. The penalty for breaking the Anti-Usury Act is fixed at \$1,000.

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A LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE BILL.—The Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick has introduced a Bill for insuring the better observance of the Lord's Day. One of the most commendable clauses in this Act prohibits Sunday sports where the contest is for gain, or any prize or reward. Attendance at such exhibitions is declared a breach of the law. Sunday excursions for amusement or pleasure are declared unlawful. Sunday shooting by gun or rifle is prohibited. Restrictions are put on railway and vessel transportation on Sundays, but not in any way to be obstructive to the necessary movement of cattle or freight.

The Act is greatly needed in this province where there is most deplorable laxity in the observance of the people's sacred rest day, the "Lord's Day," which is the oldest religious observance in human history and one of the most beneficent.

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PAYMENT OF MEMBERS. A REVIVAL NOT A NOVELTY.—The members of the recently elected British Parliament lost no time in showing how radically a majority of them differ from their predecessors. There are about 150 members of the House of Commons who have no means of livelihood outside their ordinary occupations, so that, when serving their country, or party, at Westminster, they have to rely for an income upon the subscriptions of their party friends.

Immediately after Parliament was opened a resolution was carried in the House of Commons affirming the desirability of each member being paid a Sessional Indemnity, as we say in Canada, of £300 (about \$1,500), per year. This is a very small