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OUR LONDON LETTER.

(Special to the CHRONICLE.)

LONDON, 10th March, 1898.

FINANCE.

A rally has occurred in Trunks and Canadian Pacifics, owing to a somewhat general impression that the fratricidal rate cutting combat was not to be persisted in, but Trunks are not regarded a good purchase just yet.

Mexican rails are good. Traffic increases have been especially instrumental in making them favourable. The market is talking them higher, and some of the good feeling has over-flowed into the Argentine market where a revival has set in. And again, Uruguay rails, in pretty general anticipation of a big maize harvest, which would require a lot of moving, have been bought largely. A strong man in the presidential chair tends to give investors a feeling of security, and Uruguay now has that strong man.

Together with rails, the Chinese loan and the flotation of Lipton, Limited, have provided the chief interest of the week in Throgmorton street. We are promised the prospectus of the loan in a day or two. A rush was made to underwrite the amount, and it was the work of a few hours only. The great industrial flotation of Lipton, Limited, captured popular favour with a rush. Built up, in what after all, are a few years, from a little corner shop in a provincial town, the business has now attained such magnitude as to be capitalized at \$12,500,000. Genuine dealing coupled with universal and effective advertising have been the chief factors in this immense increase. The obscure young man who weighed out sugar years ago is now Sir Thos. Lipton, a gift of \$125,000 to the Princess of Wales' Jubilee Fund for providing free packages of groceries, etc., to the poor having procured him knighthood.

Great combinations of previously competing manufactures are thick in the air. The dyeing trade is the arena of the latest development, and Bradford is the neighbourhood. Sixteen firms with a reputed combined capital of \$25,000,000, are the participants, and many other one-time rivals are making favourable responses to the initiating party.

Although the Kafir Circus is desolated and in a deep slump, there are rumors flying round of a great new Rhodesian Gold Company construction. A new Transvaal loan is by some conjectured to be coming along.

Taxation of mining dividends in the place of taxation of mining produce and the abolition of the dynamite monopoly should and probably will set a more generous current of money activity flowing in this market.

The foreign market is the scene of perpetual scares, and timidity on the part of investors is increasing.

Industrials are in a good position, probably owing to the brightness reflected from Liptons. Another great multiple-shop firm in the retail tobacconist trade opened its arms to the public, A. Baker & Company. It controls 23 shops, and we are asked to subscribe \$1,000,000.

The sad suicide of Signor Salviati, one of the vendors in the large Venetian glass and mosaic flotation of last week, is adversely affecting this promising concern.

INSURANCE.

Room for the Prudential! Some concerns are born great, whilst others have to achieve greatness. The Prudential's premium income for 1897 was \$1,560. That is not being born

great. The premium income in 1897 was \$42,000,000, and if that is not achieving greatness I do not know what is. Fancy 65,000 new ordinary policies last year, insuring \$33,500,000 and bringing in an annual income of \$1,825,000. What countless myriads of bells must have been pulled, and how innumerable must have been the doors knocked at to pile up a total of 497,000 ordinary policies and 12,500,000 industrial ones. Small wonder indeed that the "Pru." is giving its staff a half million dollars besides instituting a fund for old age provision. Sixteen thousand fewer deaths occurred last year than were expected, and the life average has lengthened from eight to eight and a quarter years. A re-arrangement of the managerate to include Mr. Fisher, a highly deserved promotion, has taken place, and the Prudential starts its new year with a comforting consciousness of wealth and well doing and a prospect of perpetual progress and increase.

Amongst the International offices which have sustained losses by great fires here lately are the Palatine, which paid out \$52,055, and the Commercial Union, paying out \$13,750, both in connection with Barlow & Jones' cotton mill conflagration at Bolton. Over the blaze, which destroyed the Mocrihanish Hotel, Campbelltown, the Scottish Union & National paid \$25,000 and the Sun \$10,000.

The Alliance issued 1,571 new policies last year, insuring \$22,957,240 and producing \$283,530 annually. As representing the way in which the funds of an old-established ordinary British office plans out its funds, the following is interesting:

Paid-up capital.....	\$ 2,750,000
Life Assurance Fund.....	14,732,915
Fire Assurance Fund.....	3,939,865
Leasehold and Investment Policies' Fund...	317,510
Reserve for outstanding claims, dividends, accrued commissions and expenses.....	719,955

The Sun Life of Canada's Klondike insurances are meeting with considerable success now that the Spring has come and the Yukon becomes navigable.

Notes and Items.

Hon. William J. Stairs, who has served on the directorate of the Union Bank of Halifax for thirty-one years, has resigned the Presidency, owing to advancing years. He retires universally respected, and is succeeded as President by Mr. William Robertson.

The People's Bank of New Brunswick is a flourishing institution. After payment of a dividend of eight per cent., and making an addition of \$10,000 to Reserve Fund, a balance of \$12,000 is carried forward. The Reserve Fund of this Bank now amounts to \$130,000.

The 38th annual meeting of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom opened recently, at the Whitehall rooms of the Hotel Metropole, with the Hon. Sir H. Stafford Northcote, Bart., M.P., the President, in the chair.

The following resolution was adopted:—

"That these Chambers regard the absorption of Chinese territory by Russia, France or Germany with great concern, as injurious to the interests of British commerce, seeing these powers exact the prohibitive duties of their respective countries in all their colonies and dependencies.

"That a representation of this view be made to the Prime Minister by deputation or otherwise."