

lines so as to reduce the rate by change of the risk carried on the higher priced items. To this, the Secretary agreed, relying on the reason alleged by the Committee, in asking for the extension of time, being the whole truth, and that they fully intended at expiry of the three months extension to continue the insurance with the Companies in its then amended form for three years. He then named a short date rate of 16 cents per cent. for the three months. On 27th December each Company received a letter from the City Treasurer dated 23rd December, in which, after repeating the agreement made as above with Mr. McCuaig and asking the acceptance of the individual Company of the terms referred to he was good enough to add that: "During the next three months the corporation will consider the advisability of continuing the system of Insurance as at present, or becoming, either in whole or in part, their own insurers." This showed that the Committee in their interview with the Secretary had carefully kept back their main reason for a three months' extension. They were getting a low rate and accommodation out of the usual course, and upon special terms, and would avail themselves of the opportunity to look round for lower rates and accommodation outside the Board Companies. There was a quick calling together of the Toronto Board, and a special meeting held, at which Mr. McCuaig was instructed to attend the last Committee meeting for the year and inform the city that on the new understanding of the situation the 16c rate would not be accepted, but an ordinary short date rate of 37 1-2 for the three months only would be considered. When this new rating was communicated to the Committee, certain of them who talk largely for the papers fell upon the Secretary, and accused him of a dishonorable action, and so on, and there was a little scene. It would be a pity to cut-off, as is now proposed, the Alderman's pay of \$300 a year. So many otherwise decent men feel constrained to do such off-color things, in the endeavor to live up to the pay. I hear that the friction and heat of that occasion has incapacitated one of the Committee from leaving his home under doctor's advice for some days. It is likely that Mr. Coady's letter to the Companies was more truthful and honest than diplomatic. Also, that the reasons he gave for the proposed three months' extension of the insurance were the correct ones and the real motive. Knowing the whole mind of the Committee as he no doubt did, he wrote from his knowledge rather than with guile.

Amidst all the uncomplimentary reflections cast upon the Fire Underwriters by ill-informed newspaper writers, it is well to remember that, as against ordinary or individual insurers of like risks, the Board Rating Officer favored the City of Toronto in naming the average rate of 2.25 per cent. for three years' insurance of the City properties to the extent of over 30 per cent. in reduction of the ordinary tariff rates.

All the City Insurances expired at noon to-day (1st Jan.), and whether any steps were taken to provide temporary protection of the City's interests against fire loss I cannot say authoritatively, but I have heard partial protection of the more hazardous properties has been sought, pending further negotiations on the part of the City. This situation of affairs is of interest to the holders of Toronto City Securities. If the City is neglecting to secure adequate protection, a great responsibility is resting on the shoulders of some one.

A Happy New Year! Yours, *Ariel.*
Toronto, 1st January, 1900.

LONDON LETTER.

21st December, 1899.

FINANCE.

With the closing of the lists for the Calico Printers' Association, the season for appealing to investors may be said to have practically come to an end until the New Year opens. In fact, that great financial and industrial agglomeration has not been so successful in London as was expected, and the bulk of the subscription will be made up in the North.

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One of the combines that are approaching in the near future is the Lancashire & Yorkshire Cotton & Wool Dyers' Association, Limited. Its capital will probably be seven and a half million dollars, and it will be floated publicly in January next.

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The net profits of Harmsworth Bros., Ltd., for the twelve months recently concluded amount to nine hundred thousand dollars. This is produced wholly by the scrap journals of the "Answers" type that this young and enterprising firm issues. The "Evening News" and the "Daily Mail"—the other properties owned by the Harmsworths—do not come under the control of the above limited company, but are held privately. The total profits raised by the publishing genius of this family must be colossal. The war has sent up the circulation of the "Daily Mail" to nearly a million copies daily.

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The report and accounts of the British South African Company have been issued at a time when a more than usually large amount of public interest will be focussed upon them. As is customary, they are over a year behind hand—the twelve months they cover ending with 31st March, 1898. The total expenditure is shown as \$6,196,770, of which about a quarter arises from the closing of outstanding expenditure in connection with the Matabeleland and Mashonaland insurrections. The revenue is only equal to \$1,611,225. The capital of the company now amounts to \$25,000,000 having been increased by the issue, in the year in question, of new five dollar shares to the number of a million and a half.

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The chartered report is a wonderful document, being in fact a year's history of a nation in the making. One point is very interesting. Labour is scarce and the Kaffirs are unwilling to work. An ingenious contrivance called the hut tax is, therefore, requisitioned. The Matabele or Mashona, or under whatever territorial name the Bantee comes, must pay this tax, and about the only possible way in which he can is to go to work for, at least, a month to earn the necessary money. As the demand for labor grows (and again it is outstripping the voluntary supply), it is to be presumed that the hut tax will be increased—thus automatically adjusting matters. When the tax is twelve times its present size, the untutored savage will either have to work all the year round or forego the luxury of a hut.

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The way the progress of the war is affecting the London stock-markets is almost laughable at times—if one can for brief space turn away in forgetfulness from the tales of the terrible slaughter that the hot wires send us. For instance, after the news of Methuen's reverse last week, nothing could be sold for