

posal made by Sir Charles Macara, the well-known cotton spinner, for the establishment of an Industrial Court for the prevention of labor disputes. The proposed court will not take the place of any existing bodies, but it will be available whenever local committees, national executive committees, and higher tribunals have arrived at a deadlock. Then matters may be referred to the Industrial Court for arbitration. It will bring into existence a new Department of State, of which it is reported Sir George Askwith (the Board of Trade "strike settler") will be the chief. No actual step can, of course, be taken by the government until Parliament re-assembles, but I have excellent reasons for stating that the formation of an Industrial Court has been practically decided upon unless there is some unexpectedly strong opposition.

ANGLO-FRENCH FINANCIAL COMPANY.

The news of the formation of the Anglo-French Financial Company by the Hirsch and other South African groups has reached the papers on this side from Montreal and Toronto, but there is very little information available here respecting it. One report in a Canadian paper stated that news had been received from London that the company had been successfully floated. It is possible that the capital may have been arranged for privately, for it is certain that no public issue has been made.

NORTH ATLANTIC SHIPPING RATES.

The announcement that the passenger rates of North Atlantic shipping companies are to be raised is not yet confirmed but appears to be correct, following, as it will, the decision to raise freight rates. The attitude of the Canadian Pacific Railway is regarded as uncertain. The Financial Times, commenting on it, says:—

"It now appears from a statement by Mr. Geo. McL. Brown, the European manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway, that the Directors' intention is merely to give the commercial community a little longer notice of the impending changes than has been deemed necessary by the other lines. According to present intentions, the Canadian Pacific Railway will put its rates up as from the commencement of next year, and the higher level of charges is likely to remain in force a long time—in fact, until one or other of the Conference lines reverses the policy now decided upon by the general body of those concerned. Such a course would have to be copied by the other lines, but in view of the possibility of still further increases in working costs before long it is not likely that any of the Companies will be in a hurry to reduce their charges, even though the volume of business might thereby be increased."

AUTUMN PROSPECTS.

There is a general feeling that the coming autumn will witness a brisk business both in the commercial and financial world. Personally, I do not share this view, because the public is not ripe for anything in the nature of an enthusiastic support for speculative securities, and it is upon the latter that the Stock Exchange mainly exists. The Stock Exchange has been so slow to move that a great part of the investment business of the country has passed out of its hands and is now handled direct with the issuing houses and financial firms who import foreign and colonial securities.

LONDONER.

London, E.C., September 23, 1911.

Insurance in the United States.

(Exclusive Correspondence of The Chronicle.)

Great Expansion of Casualty Business — Falling-off of Fire Premiums in New York City — Personal and Company Notes.

The casualty insurance business, in its manifold lines, is looming larger and larger in this city and State, and, in fact, throughout the entire country. It can readily be seen that the surface of the large field to be covered has only been barely touched. This accounts for the fact that a number of new companies have been recently organized, and that quite a number of the large foreign corporations have become the backers of annexes or subsidiary companies to do a casualty business. Moreover, nearly all the important casualty companies are at the present time doing a multiple line business—that is, not confining themselves to personal accident, but many of them branching out into several different lines, as surety, burglary, plate-glass, liability, etc. There is a strong tendency on the part of the different commonwealths to take a hand in obnoxious movements toward the regulation or restriction of this class of business, and State insurance is freely talked of. While this may be attempted, however, it is doubtful whether there can be any permanent interference with the operations of the regular companies. The total income of the casualty companies reporting in New York during 1910 was about \$100,000,000, and during the whole period in which casualty insurance has been done in this country, the income has been nearly \$300,000,000. When it is considered that only during the past few years has there been a large reaching out after anything but personal accident insurance, it can readily be seen how large and fertile a field is stretching before the companies. The latest important company which has hitherto done only a health and accident business, but has now taken up multiple lines, is the Preferred Accident Insurance Company, of this city, whose fine standing and character will doubtless give it a large business from the start.

FALLING-OFF IN FIRE PREMIUMS.

Three principal causes are assigned for the falling off of fire insurance premiums in the Metropolitan District during the first six months of this year. The first is lower rates, induced, perhaps, by the so-called "investigation" of fire insurance companies by a legislative committee early this year. The second is the cutting down of lines by a number of the companies in the conflagration districts, where the liability to great loss is large and constantly increasing in spite of the new high pressure system. The third is the general character of business throughout the country and the smaller lines of stocks which have been carried by mercantile and manufacturing concerns. The figures show that the leading companies have lost largely in premiums as compared with a year ago. This, moreover, is not due to excessive outside competition, for such has not existed. After the settlement of certain radical questions and the return of business to its normal condition, fire insurance may be expected to grow, and it is to be hoped, prosper in the future better than it has in the past.

NOTES.

It is now becoming quite the fashion for life insurance companies to have \$100,000 clubs, but the New York Life has so many large producers that it has