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The Portland Arson Case. The insurance companies engaged in the recent fight against Scovil, of Portland, deserve congratulations. In the spring of 1897 Scovil entered an action against the Caledonian and British America Insurance Companies for \$3,300, the amount of insurance on his house and barn. With evidence of arson, probable but not conclusive, the companies decided to defend the action. As a result of their plucky determination to risk a lawsuit, a man named Johnson has been sent to prison for arson; a witness named Coolican has two years for reflection upon the very common crime of perjury; another witness sought solitude and found it not in the Crow's Nest Pass; and Scovil, quite discouraged by the loss of his house, barn and accomplices, became fearful and faint-hearted on hearing that a warrant charged him with Coolican's crime. In short, Scovil has levanted, leaving the Master in Chambers at Toronto to dismiss the civil suits against the insurance companies for lack of prosecution. Thus ends a short story of crime and conspiracy, the termination of which is calculated to infuse fresh courage into fire insurance companies when entertaining reasonable doubts or having suspicious circumstances in connection with claims made upon them by imitators of Scovil. The companies concerned may well be congratulated upon the issue of a stout and successful fight.

Some Statutory Changes. In this issue we publish some of the recent statutory changes in Ontario, affecting banks, insurance and loan companies, etc. The Government regulating of the domestic affairs of loan and other companies is regarded by some as unnecessary. But, now that every by-law must pass the critical eye of one official, and that no one can go into a court of law without the permission of the Attorney-General, strong words are being used, and some are even suggesting that the Act of last session should be disallowed. The new taxes levied upon banks and insurance companies also caused much commotion at the time

they were introduced. Besides the taxes referred to, the tax will also be collected from loan companies, trust companies, railway companies, street railways and electric railways, telegraph companies, telephone companies, gas and electric light companies, natural gas companies, express companies and sleeping car companies. In respect of most of these corporations, the Act provides that they shall continue to be assessable and taxable for municipal purposes as heretofore, except that the municipal tax payable to any municipality where the head office is situate shall be upon the income which is derived from investments in that municipality alone. This will, for instance, prevent the city of Hamilton from gathering in a tax upon the income received from the Canada Life from all quarters.

A New Industry.

In days of old, the poulterer, an officer of the English king's household, who had the charge of the barn-yard, complained that the royal allowance for feeding the feathered fowls which are propagated and fed for the table, and for their eggs, feathers, etc., such as cocks and hens, capons, turkeys, ducks and geese, was insufficient. It seems a pity that the following discovery was not made in time for the royal poulterer's relief. A Kansas man claims that paper torn into shreds and soaked in sour milk until it becomes a pulpy mass is eaten by hens with great gusto. He does not state of the mucilaginous mass that

*A little vinegar will much embellish,
And send it down with a kind of relish.*

However, he boldly asserts that this strange food adds to the hens' egg-producing qualities. The discovery and the discoverer may well be left to the poulterers and the farmers to investigate and deal with.

But we regret to note that the Kansas man has afforded some discontented insurance journalists an opportunity to insinuate that there are a great many papers published which will make better hen food than reading matter, better food for fowls than food for thought. Why don't they convert their editorial rooms into poultry pulp mills?