

a number of rumours which were being energetically denied almost to the very last. The Westminster is the last of its race of old fire mutuals and follows the Hand-in-Hand, its illustrious predecessor, at a respectful but not prolonged distance. The mutuals have had their day and it is now recognized that the field is only cultivable by big, powerful corporations like the Alliance, Commercial Union, Royal, Sun, etc. As in the case of the Hand-in-Hand the old name is to be retained, and outwardly there will be little change.

Those policy-holders of the Westminster who rank as members, are treated most kindly, not to say deferentially in the fusion agreement and practically do as they like with the \$1,700,000, which are accumulated in the reserve funds. The staff is treated kindly also. If there is much more of this extra-paying and pensioning off there will soon be excessive competition for posts in offices which are liable to absorption.

THE STAMP TAX IN THE CITY.

To the Editor of THE CHRONICLE.

Sir:—The most crying grievance in the Urban parts of the country is the stamp tax. Those who favour this means of taxation say it has come to stay, and we who own and trade in stocks must face the situation. What is the situation? City trades—unlike country swaps—are narrow—very narrow in many cases—barely wide enough to permit two trades passing each other with a margin of profit, and are flanked by either deep losses where the return of the stock does not give active dealing, or by small and hard earned profits. In the country, the trader may give a wide berth to the tax by swopping for a bunch of eggs—in the city, he is up against it, so to speak, he must pay it or leave his business, and the city (he leaves the city and does his trading in New York or Toronto, when he can do so, and the new king of taxation passes by without getting contemptuously stuck on him). In the country stocks readily become accustomed to being put away in stockings, whatnots and other places of safe-keeping. There are few inducements to draw them from their seclusion. In the city the contrary is the case, everything is bustling, stocks are out and doing, traded in from hand to hand, having their hair trimmed (i.e., being scalped) and the rules of trade leave nothing to divert their attention from the approaching stamp. The taste of the gum gets on your palate and we contemplate the sneaking stealth of the tax as it approaches after each transaction with awe, and we turn in our tracks and think of taking to Ontario to do our business.

Many traders in securities are selling at a loss, and such a thing as a big transaction for a small margin of profit is becoming a recollection. Stockbroking is no longer an unmixed pleasure, there is always the knowledge of meeting this beastly tax. Our methods of trading in securities have been constructed by the stockbrokers who do the business and were and are adapted to the use for which they were intended. They are good enough and sane enough to protect the owners of securities if the tax were out of the way—they are not satisfactory if this infernal stamp tax is to be stuck all over them. I do not advocate the prohibition of taxation in our city business—I quite approve of it if levied with due regard for the vested rights of those taxed—but what I want to ask is why should this indirect, restrictive and discriminatory tax be fastened on the stockholders. The stock, the share and the bond are absolute necessities to the development of this Canada of ours, and are of the greatest use in fostering industries and enterprises of all kinds. Surely every preference and protection should be

given to any method that so largely tends to provide capital for the needs of this growing country.

An Act was passed, the British North America Act, which regulated the speed at which Provincial Legislatures should separate us from our money, but this new Act shows that the old one is ignored. What more can be done to remedy this unfair taxation on a business necessary to the development of Canada? Those who have not personally been up against this question do not realize how serious it will become. I certainly am of the opinion that the law should be repealed as ultra vires.

My excuse, Mr. Editor, for trespassing on your valuable space is that I know a great many people are interested in this question.

Yours very truly,

CORK J. MCCREIL

NOTE.—The above is a witty, good-humoured parody of the Hon. Mr. Corkill's timely and forcible letter, protesting against the aggressive practice of automobilists, who, by their fast driving on rural roads, are obstructing traffic by practically depriving farmers and their families from the use of the public highways, just as the provincial stamp tax is obstructing business, and practically depriving investors of the free use of their funds on the Stock Exchange.—"Ed."

STOCK EXCHANGE NOTES.

Wednesday, p.m., August 9, 1905.

A firm and confident tone was evident throughout the week, and the market closed strong. Trading broadened and a good general business was transacted. The advance in Twin City was the feature of the week, and on a jump of five points, the stock became more active than for some time past. It seems understood that the sudden rise was purely manipulative, and was not accompanied by any satisfactory explanation. The fact that the company has \$4,000,000 more stock that has to find a market sooner or later, may have something to do with the matter. Detroit Railway is again the most active of the tractions and holds firm in face of a fair volume of selling. This stock as a 5 per cent. dividend payer, and in view of its handsome earnings, should sell higher, it will probably reward patient holders. The recent report of a cash offer of 120 per share for Montreal Cotton Stock by the textile interests, does not seem warranted, and the price in the open market, where the stock is offered at 117, shows what amount of credence the story received. Another unexplained movement in Scotia, this time upward, was seen this week. This stock which has been very erratic for months past, seems to veer with every wind that blows. Rumours of further capital requirements seemingly will not down.

The bank rate in Montreal for call money remains unchanged at 4½ per cent., and supplies are still ample. The fact that a large institution, not a heavy lender last year, will offer its funds to the "Street" this fall, will tend further to minimize the possibilities of tight money here. In New York the call rate to-day was 2 per cent., while in London call money is loaning at 1½ per cent.

The quotations for money at Continental points are as follows:—

	Market.	Bank.
Paris.....	1½	3
Berlin.....	2	3
Amsterdam.....	2½	2½
Brussels.....	2½	3
Vienna.....	3½	3½

C. P. R. again sold at 156 this week, and closed with 155 bid, a gain of ¾ of a point for the week. The trading was very limited, and only 113 shares came out during the week. The earnings for the last ten days of July show an increase of \$138,000.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company's stock quotations as compared with a week ago are as follows:—

	A week ago.	To-day
First Preference.....	111	111½
Second Preference.....	102	102½
Third Preference.....	51½	51½