

Congress having declined to grant concessions to Cuban sugar, the sugar interests of the island are in distress, and the Cubans are threatened with the ruinous collapse of a great industry. Cuba and the Southern States are rivals in tobacco and sugar. To protect the home growers Congress naturally inclines. The result is that Cuba is on the eve of a revolution in favour of annexation to the United States, not as a colony, but as an integral part of the Republic. The situation is deeply interesting. The prospects are that the United States, after erecting Cuba into a republic, will destroy and swallow its infant offspring, like a cannibal mother making a meal of her own babe.

**PRESENTATION TO MR. GEORGE HAGUE ON HIS
RETIRING FROM THE MANAGEMENT OF THE
MERCHANTS' BANK OF CANADA.**

On the last occasion, a few days ago, on which Mr. George Hague attended the Merchants' Bank of Canada in his capacity as general manager, the directors presented him with a costly piece of silverware as a token of their high appreciation of his services during the last twenty-five years. When Mr. Hague was asked to assume the management of the Merchants' Bank of Canada it was in a very perilous condition, so much so that another banker, to whom the appointment was offered, lucrative as it was, declined to consider it, as he thought the position too risky a chance. Mr. Hague at the time had retired from banking life, after being many years general manager of the Bank of Toronto. He was persuaded to undertake the task of bringing the Merchants' Bank into sounder condition, in which effort, after such labours and anxieties as are rarely experienced, he fully succeeded. There are few now living who can recall the painful anxiety which prevailed in banking circles when the collapse of the Merchants' Bank of Canada was feared, even daily expected. Those whose memories reach back as far, know what a sense of relief passed over the community when it was announced that Mr. George Hague had assumed the management which he did from a conviction of its being a public duty. It is to be regretted that no record exists of that episode in Canadian banking history, which, if published, would be as interesting as any romance, and not without a touch of that element. The Nestor of Canadian banking retires a second time to private life, accompanied with the best wishes of a host of friends, not only in Canada, but in the banking and financial circles of the United States and Great Britain.

A SINGULAR ACCIDENT CLAIM was recently paid in Philadelphia by the U.S. Casualty Co., says "Accident Assurance." The claimant was reading a newspaper when his attention was attracted by something else, and in turning the edge of the paper he cut the membrane of one eye, seriously disabling him for some time.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

The accident to the Honourable Mr. Chamberlain would at any time have been most regrettable, but happening while the Colonial Conference was in session over which he presides, it was deplorably untimely. The Secretary for the Colonies is one of the very small number of men whose removal from active life would, at this juncture, be a calamity to the Empire. He has proved himself to be a statesman in advance of his political associates, indeed, of the times, just as he was when Mayor of Birmingham. His projects for improving that city were denounced as chimerical, as rash to the point of danger. But he pushed on, overcame all financial obstacles, subdued local prejudices, won over the City Council to his views and so transformed the centre of Birmingham and improved the approaches to the suburbs as to advance the city half a century in the appearance of its main thoroughfares, and the result was a financial triumph as Mr. Chamberlain predicted.

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The same far-seeing gift, sanguine spirit and determination to have his forecasts fulfilled, has been shown throughout Mr. Chamberlain's career at the Colonial office. He has made the unification, the consolidation of the British Empire his life work. He has already put his stamp upon the Empire and he cannot but be regarded as being the instrument raised up by Providence to be the inspiring, guiding spirit of a movement to knit into close union the motherland and all her dependencies.

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The convalescence of the King is proceeding as satisfactorily as can be desired, so say the attendant physicians. His Majesty's impatience to get the Coronation over at an early date is a favourable sign. He must be feeling anything but an invalid to be so confident of having sufficient strength to go through the ceremony in a few weeks. A patient's determination to get well is helpful to his desire. The lines:

"To hope till hope creates
The thing it contemplates,"

describe a phenomenon constantly seen by the faculty. The Coronation seems likely to occur before the Fall.

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier is one of the great orators of the day, probably the greatest in the Empire, which, though rich in statesmen of distinction, has very few orators, in the proper sense of that misused word. At the dinner given recently by the Constitutional Club, London, the Premier of Canada carried off the honours. He rebuked those who have