

The Chronicle

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Insurance Legislation. We publish in this issue of THE CHRONICLE two acts passed by the Quebec Legislature affecting insurance companies—the one respecting taxation, and the other regarding the inspection of companies. We regret to note that the latter is not to apply to business transacted before the 1st January next.

Sir George White's Eloquence.

Sir George White, whose gallantry in the memorable defence of Ladysmith has endeared him to his countrymen, and gained the absolute reverence of the people of Natal, is now homeward bound. Arrangements are being made at Southampton for a great public reception on his arrival at that port. Before leaving Cape Town, on the 28th ult., he was made the recipient of a congratulatory address, and his reply thereto seems to have surprised the thousands present. They knew him to be a brave soldier; but they were quite unprepared to find him capable of making a remarkably eloquent speech. Two of his illustrations of the courage displayed by the defenders of Ladysmith deserve to be embodied in the school-books of the next generation. They serve to show there is no decadence in British pluck and valour.

As an instance of the bravery of the troops on that historic occasion of January 6th, when the Boers tried to take Ladysmith by assault, he said that 16 soldiers of the Manchester Regiment held a position on that day, without any officers to guide and direct them, from three o'clock in the morning until nightfall. When the roll-call was taken, after the enemy had been completely beaten back, 14 of those brave men were found to have been killed, another was wounded, and only one escaped unscathed.

Sir George gave, as another instance, the gallantry of Sergeant Hope, of the Royal Artillery. As his battery was going into action, he was struck by a shell, which carried away his arm and leg. As his helpless and almost lifeless body fell across the trail of the gun he urged his comrades to do their duty, and shouted to them, "Throw me out of the way, boys. Go on working the gun."

Post Prandial Pleasantries.

We have not the pleasure of personal acquaintanceship with Mr. Simon Ford, a guest of the evening at a recent dinner of the leading New York bankers; but we venture to say he has a fund of gentle raillery, of lively talk, and of harmless merriment and ironical pleasantry, calculated to promote good humor and gaiety at any feast. We can almost hear the laughter, as Mr. Ford poked the following fun, points of wit, and sprightly observation, through the smoke-cloud resting over the table, at his amused hosts. Practical, hard-headed bankers, and serious minded business men, are very apt to prefer an after-dinner speech abounding with sportive and lively pleasantries, even if the resultant merriment is at their expense, rather than the expressions of patriotic sentiment uttered by a gifted orator. Noble thoughts in noble language are appreciated in the pulpit and the lecture-room; but, around the dinner table, a sweet singer, a good storyteller, or a mirth-provoking philosopher of the Ford type takes precedence of the most eloquent of silver-tongued talkers. His remarks, as published in the "Bank Messenger," should be perused by any banker whose sense of humour has not been completely smothered by the seriousness of his daily occupation.

"As I sat here this evening," he began, "listening to the strains of that fine old bankers' anthem, entitled 'When You Ain't Got no Money, Why You Needn't Come Around,' I was thinking what a grand idea it was for you magnates to get together once a year to exchange ideas and settle among yourselves what shall be done, and who shall be done, and how you will do them."

"I have observed," continued Mr. Ford, "that one's reception at a bank varies somewhat with the condition of the money market. Go in when money is easy and the president falls on your neck, calls you by your first name, and cheerfully loans you large sums on your Balloon Common and your Smoke Preferred, and you go on your way rejoicing. The next day, news having arrived that a Gordon Highlander has strained a tendon in his leg while sprinting away from a Dutchman near Ladysmith, or an Irish lady chef has sent home two pounds sterling to her family, money goes up to 180 per cent. a minute, and you get a note requesting you to remove your Balloon Common and your Smoke Preferred and substitute government bonds therefor. And still you wonder at crime."

"Bankers are too prone to judge a man by his appearance, so that the very men that need the money most have the hardest work to get it. They are apt, especially at the city bank, to discriminate against the feller who looks Rocky in favor of the Rockefeller."

"But after all, banks and trust companies do a lot of good in a quiet way, especially to their directors. It would sometimes be mortifying to these directors to have to attempt to borrow money on certain securities in institutions with which they were not connected, because, instead of getting the money, they might get six months."