

**Fire Insurance Legal Decisions.** We complete in this issue our publication of the British & Colonial decisions affecting fire insurance, specially prepared by Mr. R. L. Maclennan for the CHRONICLE. The subject matter dealt with herein being: change material to the risk; insurance in other companies; the insurance agent; loss, proof and payment; subrogation; legal actions.

We also print in this number a summary of the Parliamentary Estimates and will review same next week, letters from correspondents at New York and Toronto, and extracts from an interesting paper on the risks attending the use of acetylene, read at the annual meeting of the Insurance and Actuarial Society of Glasgow.

**Railway Rate War.** It will indeed be a good thing for the travelling public if the outcome of the continued fighting between the rival Railway Companies should be a two cent a mile rate. It is thought by some railway men that increased travel would compensate the roads for the reduction. But whether the inducement of cheap fares will ensure permanency to the present activity on the part of the travelling public is something for Railway managers to ponder upon and decide. Whatever the reason may be, there is evidence of a disposition among travellers to take advantage of the inducements offered them by the war of rates, and also a notable increase in the receipts of some of the competing lines.

**Government Rate of Interest.** We understand that the Government rate of interest will be reduced on July 1st next to 2 1-2 per cent. Such a course is very commendable, as the credit of Canada is now so well established that her future Governments should have no difficulty in providing for any public requirements without paying as in the past a high rate of interest to an army of small depositors throughout the Dominion. The handling of money received through the Government Savings' Banks necessitates the maintenance of a large staff of officials, payment for whose services adds greatly to the cost of the money thus received by the Government.

Altogether, we are glad to hear of the reported reduction, and hope it may be followed by a similar movement on the part of the chartered banks who may, in course of time, be thus enabled to make a corresponding reduction in the rate of interest on loans. We know there are many bankers who fear that any lessening of the rate of interest now paid for deposits will lead to the withdrawal of a large amount of same. This is not likely to happen. The ordinary Bank depositor accepts a low rate of interest rather than invest or, as he thinks, risk his money in some labour-employed industry.

We regard the action of the Government in reducing the rate of interest as an indication of their intention to obtain money in future upon the best terms possible. Accepting deposits from the people

at 3 per cent. is not profitable to a country able to obtain money at a lower rate from Banks and foreign investors.

#### WHAT WILL GREAT BRITAIN DO?

There is much significance attached to the news wired from Halifax regarding the movements of Admiral Sir John Fisher and General Montgomery Moore. That the commander of the Forces in Canada with some of his officers should visit Washington would not be a subject for remark at any other time than the present, and that Admiral Sir John Fisher should concentrate the ships comprising the North American fleet in the blue waters of Bermuda would not excite attention if it were usual.

Both Admiral Fisher and General Moore are probably acting under instructions from the British Government, and what their movements may portend we can only surmise. But the serious aspect of the situation is deepened by the possibility that the supposed conference at Washington between the United States Government and representatives of the British Army and Navy is for the purpose of discussing what action will be taken by the latter to protect British commerce and British interests in the West Indies in the event of an outbreak of hostilities with Spain and the United States as antagonists.

Diplomacy and a very free press play so large a part in determining the fate of nations that 'tis difficult to foretell what may be the outcome of the hurried preparations for war in both the countries most concerned.

However, it is still almost incredible that the Government of the United States will yield to the clamor of a certain section of the population for war with Spain, merely advancing the firings of the enquiry into the loss of the battle-ship "Maine" as a pretext.

The calm and dispassionate judgment of other nations would unhesitatingly condemn our republican neighbours for giving such a flimsy reason for resorting to the sword.

The Court of enquiry into the loss of the "Maine" was not an independent and unbiased tribunal. A number of United States officers searching for signs of the dreadful means by which hundreds of their countrymen and a noble ship were destroyed must, if they are ordinary mortals, insensibly have been influenced by their feelings. Their report, briefly stated, is that the loss of the "Maine" was due to an explosion from the outside of the ship, and possibly from a powerful sub-marine mine, the exact character of which the Court cannot determine.

They admit being unable to fix the responsibility for the explosion. Surely the United States President will hesitate before committing his country to war upon the "Maine" incident alone.

As those most familiar with events transpiring at Washington now seem to expect war, we may reasonably indulge in reflections upon what part Great Britain will take in the struggle. Will the protection of