

### PROMINENT TOPICS.

The disastrous accident on the Grand Trunk Railway between London and Sarnia has thrown a shade of gloom over the season. Sympathy with the bereaved families and the injured is universal. The management of the Grand Trunk has been so excellent for a length of time under the new regime established a few years ago, that such a calamity has excited the greatest regret for the officials, who have done so much and spent so freely to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers. Although an inquest has been held, the cause of the accident is still uncertain. It would seem, and ought to be impossible, under the regulations, for a freight train and a passenger train to dash into each other. Why the freight train was in the way of a passenger Express running 40 miles an hour is the mystery that should be explained. Doubtless, the Company will investigate the affair in its own interests, as well as for the satisfaction of the public, and in justice to certain of its servants who are now under terrible imputations, which may be unjust, or so just as to demand positive proceedings. Until the real cause of this awful disaster is discovered and officially announced, judgment should be suspended.

As we go to press it is announced that Mr. McGuigan, Manager of the Grand Trunk, assisted by the Superintendent and other experienced officers, with the Company's solicitor, is now conducting an investigation into the Wanstead disaster.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, besides splendid traffic receipts, had heavier receipts last year from land sales than ever before. The sales for the month of December totalled 577,482.61 acres for \$1,683,289.45, as against 131,151.16 acres for \$403,261.78 in 1901. For the year of 1902 the sales were 2,420,000 acres for \$8,140,000, against 831,922 acres for \$2,640,000 in 1901. The increase in acreage sold is therefore 1,589,000 acres. The returns not only enrich the Company, but give promise of such development in the Northwest as will add materially to the productive resources and trade of Canada.

The Rev. J. A. Macdonald has been appointed editor of the "Globe" in succession to Mr. J. S. Willison, who recently resigned, to take charge of a new journal in Toronto. Mr. Macdonald was five years in charge of a Presbyterian church at St. Thomas, has edited with much ability the "Westminster" since 1896, and, before that, the "Knox College Monthly." One of the ablest members of the "Globe's" editorial staff for many years was Mr. Inglis, a retired Presbyterian clergyman, whose racy, combative, incisive style made his articles as interesting as the fullness of his information rendered them valuable.

Scotch clergymen when writing in a daily paper show that they are members of the Church Militant; they wield a "claymore" with dexterity and force. We wish our confrère every success.

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The Collector of Customs at this port has published the following returns of the receipts for each month in 1902, compared with 1901, showing an increase of \$1,515,832 over previous year:—

	1902.	1901.
January.....	\$ 818,523	\$706,686
February.....	753,033	794,333
March.....	792,684	753,122
April.....	730,385	613,704
May.....	824,018	714,207
June.....	1,025,994	769,467
July.....	989,185	936,532
August.....	1,138,267	905,468
September.....	957,575	795,697
October.....	994,336	858,454
November.....	1,050,451	758,679
December.....	906,921	839,191
Total.....	\$10,981,371	\$9,465,539

The Customs receipts in Toronto were \$6,468,844, which exceeds 1901 by \$961,590. Halifax receipts were \$1,599,196, an excess over 1900 of \$113,922.

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The people of Natal, to protect whom was one main object of the war, have informed Mr. Chamberlain that they will, voluntarily, assume a share of the costs of the struggle, to the extent of about \$10,000,000, in order to evidence their loyalty and gratitude to the Empire for saving the colony from conquest by the Transvaal Boers. This is one of the direct results of Mr. Chamberlain's mission to South Africa, and must be a source of the highest gratification to the whole Empire as showing how worthy were the people of Natal of the sacrifices made on their behalf.

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King Edward VII. was proclaimed Emperor of India on New Year's Day at a ceremonial gathering at Delhi of Indian potentates, troops and people surpassing in magnificence any on record. To grasp the deep significance of this event, one needs, to read Lord Roberts' work on India, wherein a different scene is described that gave little promise of heralding the peaceful display at the recent Delhi Durbar. After announcing the coming visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, the King-Emperor says in his message:

"I renew the assurances of my regard for the liberties of the Indian people; of my respect for their dignities and rights; of my interest in their advancement and of my devotion to their welfare. These are the supreme aims and objects of my rule, which, under the blessing of Almighty God, will lead to the increasing prosperity of my Indian Empire and to the greater happiness of its people."

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The Venezuelan dispute is to be referred to the Hague International Arbitration Tribunal—if another revolution there does not upset the arrangement, and another one is about due.