

# The Chronicle

## Insurance & Finance.

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**The "Insurance Index" Illustrated.** The March-April number of the "Insurance Index," called its "Hartford Double Number," is devoted to a history and description of Hartford as an insurance centre, with notices of the various companies established in that city and their leading officers. The publisher claims that this issue is "the most elaborately illustrated number of an insurance journal ever issued in this country or abroad." This boast is not likely to be challenged. The views of insurance offices, exteriors and interiors are admirably executed, and the portraits of presidents, vice-presidents, actuaries, managers, secretaries, agents, and other officers are clear and bright. Judging by the portraits in the "Index," the business of insurance at Hartford is evidently conducive to health, with a tendency to expansion, we may say, to the laying up of a good "reserve," to say nothing about a "surplus," of adipose tissue, in which comfortable condition may they long remain.

**A Government Telegraph System.** The Dominion Government is, or has been, considering the proposal to take over the Dominion telegraph systems.

What particular advantage to the country it is believed, would arise from the telegraphs being all under government control has not been revealed. That in all other Colonies this service is a government monopoly, is an interesting fact, but, of itself, is no reason why Canada should adopt the same policy. Before an intelligent judgment could be arrived at as to the respective advantages to a country of a government owned telegraph system and a service in the hands of private companies, it would be necessary to have more data as evidence, on behalf of and against both systems than is now available. The government telegraph service in Great Britain is not viewed with favour by Canadians, and is a non-paying enterprise, so far as the government is interested, the annual deficit being about 8 to 10 millions of dollars. In

Canada it would not conduce to the maintenance of efficiency, still less to improvement, for the whole staff engaged in operating our telegraph service to be government servants. Neither would it tend to confirm, or enhance the confidence now felt by the public of Canada in the absolute secrecy of the messages transmitted by telegraph were they all placed in the hands of government officials. Were this confidence shaken the popularity of the service would be lowered, consequently its value would be depreciated. Under the existing system the telegraph companies in Canada appoint operators and electricians and other officials on their merits, as their object is to have their enterprise conducted with the utmost efficiency and economy. Were the government to control the telegraphs there would be an immense field of patronage thrown open to members of Parliament and to the defeated candidates of the party in power. Fitness, capacity, in a word, merit, would weigh little compared with political reasons, and each of the staff would be kept in close touch with the person and the party from whom he received his appointment in the government telegraph service. Such conditions would not improve the service, but could hardly fail to do it damage. Such slow delivery of messages as prevails in England would be found an intolerable nuisance in Canada, but were all the operators government officials, we fear the intolerable would have to be endured. A Montrealer in England tells of expecting a very important message, early one morning, which was to be addressed to his hotel. As it was much later than expected he went to enquire and found that it had been ready for delivery, properly addressed, three hours. The clerk said:—"I was expecting you would be round some time during the day, so I laid it aside for you." He tells of there being in England nothing like the celerity, the anxiety to secure quick dispatch and delivery of messages which are characteristic of our telegraphic service.