

A STORY WITH A MORAL.

A recent court martial at Esquimalt has had the effect of emphasizing the point that people should not accept blindly the statements made to them in business matters. A lieutenant on one of H. M. Ships, who was president of the canteen, and, in consequence, was responsible for its finances, was accustomed to allow Tom, Dick and Harry to go to the chest and help themselves to funds, replacing the amounts with bonds, while occasionally they left no acknowledgment. When the time for settlement came there was a deficiency. The court martial resulted in the acquittal of the officer, but he was warned of the maxim not that every man is honest until he be proved to be a rogue, but to watch other people carefully until their reliability is assured. Business men cannot keep too close an eye on their customers.

TOO MANY EXPENDITURES.

In the opinion of Mr. Clouston, General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, Canada has been spending too much money, has given too many subsidies to railways, has undertaken too many expensive works and has wasted too much good money. It is very possible that in connection with our public works there has been a certain amount of waste; but where, we ask, have public works been entered into largely without a certain amount finding its way into channels which originally it was never intended that it should find? Bankers, as a rule, are accustomed to pursue a conservative policy, but, we ask, if by our expenditures on railways and public works the country has not been substantially benefitted? Mr. Clouston has drawn the issue between himself and the Finance Minister who when here boasted of what the national expenditures had already accomplished. Let them settle it between them. No one can, however, ignore the facts, and we are all of us hoping for still more substantial results than have followed so far. Even though Mr. Clouston made the remarks we have quoted, he does not say that there is anything the matter with Canada which has passed comparatively unscathed through the recent financial crisis that has caused so much trouble in the United States. We are emphatically looking to the future for which, if we do prepare, we need not expect to have our full share of the advantage.

TARIFF REFORM.

The visiting Ministers have been to Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and New Westminster, and have now returned home by way of the United States where, we presume, they may possibly pick up some information with respect to tariff matters. From their observations and statements here and also from the declarations of the Premier at Montreal, and elsewhere, the Government are alive to the necessities which exist for tariff reform, and as, Sir John Thompson said, "at the proper time the Government will show the people that it had their interests at heart." But when will the proper time arrive? There is such a thin-

as having to wait too long—till in fact "the heart grows sick and the brain benumbed as well as the wearied hand." There can be no doubt that our industrial life has been quickened and developed to a certain extent, but there has followed a pause, due to the overwhelming forces of the special interests that have been specially benefitted at the expense of those factors in the national life which although individually smaller have nevertheless done their share towards bringing about the grand result. It is these smaller interests—these more distantly separated and in consequence less considered communities—which require to be attended to, if the Government desires to show the people that it has their interests at heart. There ought to be no delay, and we trust that when Parliament meets, which, it is announced, will be in January next, Hon. Mr. Foster will have his proposals to submit at an early period of the session in order that they may be fully discussed, not alone in Parliament, but by the country at large, before tariff matters assume the shape of legislation.

For months, in fact for long before the opening of last session the Canadian tariff was in the mouths of the people—not on account of the deliverances of those who were prepared to allow our fiscal policy to be regulated from Washington; but because the existing anomalies had forced even the strongest supporters of the Government to demand changes. We can well imagine the unwillingness of the Ministry to unsettle matters and to do anything that would not be likely to have the element of permanency; but we do think that before the next session they should be able with the information at their command to do what they admittedly realize to be necessary and in the true interests—not of Montreal, Toronto, the Maritime Provinces, or even of Victoria; but of the entire Dominion of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Much has been said about the duty of individual citizens to make sacrifices for the benefit of all. Thus far, the larger and wealthier elements have been the gainers, and now we trust will come the turn of those whose rights and whose demands have been just as great, but which have not received their due share of official attention.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

IN Toronto the price of coal has gone up to \$6 per ton, an increase of 50 cents.

TIMBER explorers report that almost the entire timber forests in the district north and west of Lake Winnipeg, have been wiped out by fires. The Indians are chiefly to blame for the destruction of the forests as they have ignited them in their endeavor to drive the fur bearing animals out of the woods.

It has been, we hear, decided at Ottawa that the Dominion will not be represented at the Midwinter Fair, still we trust that to some extent the Provinces will contribute specimens of what they can raise. We do not for a moment expect that the farming interests of the

country will be represented by their live stock. The distance from the centres of production is too far, but in manufactured products—not forgetting cheese and butter—grains and such like, the Dominion ought to make a good showing while we are pleased to know that in her own specialties British Columbia is likely to do herself every credit.

GOLDWIN SMITH has gone back to England, doubtless a very disappointed man. This former Oxford professor has probably discovered that practical politics are not in his line, however much he might be disposed to theorize and to endeavor to bring about a state of affairs which could only commend itself to *amateurs, dilettanti* and disappointed and played out politicians. Soured Sir Richard was not indisposed to utilize Mr. Smith; Erastus Wiman was glad to get hold of him, while it was a godsend to Farrar to get under the wing of a gentleman of the Professor's undisputed respectability. For the present it would appear as if lookings to Washington were out of date.

THERE are some who will scarcely regard with favor the fact of a Japanese syndicate having purchased a saw-mill at Vancouver with the object of utilizing timber limits which they own on the Sound and exporting the product to Japan. Such, however, is the report which comes from the Terminal City, and for our part we are pleased to notice that some further out-side capital, even though it is in a comparatively small way, has been induced here. It may be that the labor employed will be to a large extent Japanese; but the people of that race are not like the Chinese who are accustomed to leave as little as possible behind them. They, it is said, spend their money in the community in which they live, and this one department of trade is likely to be the precursor of development in other branches.

THE accident insurance companies have suffered severely from the numerous claims made upon them during the current year; not only have the casualties for which these companies afford remuneration been very many but that portion of the year that has passed away has been a period of great disaster—in fire, in flood, and the still more terrible cyclone, and leads to the grateful reflection how largely the burden of these calamities has been minified through insurance, the magnificent principle of which we never fully appreciate until we view it in the assuaging of calamity. Seldom does it happen that accidental insurance companies quibble about settling their risks when they fall due. Indeed, it would be difficult for them to do so, considering that the facts of the accident are there before them. But, to their credit be it said, we have known them, in the event of a disaster make an exception in the case of a tardy paying policy-holder, and where the facts warranted make exceptions or rather refrain from quibbles, such as some of the cheap Jack life institutions would not have failed to interpose.