THE CASUALTY COMPANIES AND WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

Since the coming into force of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, the casualty branch of insurance in Great Britain has attracted special attention to itself. It is natural therefore that British readers should show considerable interest in the inaugural address of President E. Willans, of the Toronto Insurance Institute—considering it as a statement reflecting Canadian conditions and opinions. The Review of London refers to Mr. Willan's address as follows:

"In his masterly exposition of the subject, he dealt with the introduction and growth of accident insurance and its many vicissitudes. He closely watches events in England, and had something to say on our recent Compensation Act. 'This advanced legislation,' he observed, 'has not yet reached our shore, but that it will come there is every indication. The unsatisfactory character of the legislation of recent years has pointed towards this as a logical outcome. The introduction into Canada of a similar Act would certainly increase the premium income of accident companies. I believe, however, the companies have now more reliable statistics, available for fixing premium rates, than was the case with liability insurance, so that there would be more certainty of carrying on the business at a profit. Insurance underwriters have expressed the opinion that no other branch of insurance has made such rapid development in the nature and extent of the risk as accident insurance. From the simple provision of payment of indemnity for accidental death due to an accident to a train while in motion we have, inside of sixty years, extended the accident policy so that it now covers a multiplicity of benefits.' The President of the Toronto Institute also expressed an optimistic view regarding the future o faccident insurance—but, he adds: 'As I contemplate this rapid extension, I have a profound conviction that we require a more scientific study of the problems involved in our business.'"

The first legal decision in connection with the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, has been received with mingled feelings in insurance circles, says the London correspondent of The Spectator of New York, who goes on to state that though the sum of money involved in the case was altogether trivial, judgment may have curious effects. Briefly stated, the facts adjudicated upon were these. A widow, owning house property, employed a laborer to do whitewashing, and whilst so engaged, he fell from a ladder and sustained a broken rib. The point upon which the validity of the claim for compensation turned was whether, under such conditions, the person employed should be regarded as a "servant," or as a "contractor." In giving a verdict for the plaintiff the judge expressed the opinion that as the legislation had not exhaustively defined "service" he must consider all the circumstances. It made no difference, he held, whether payment was made by the day, or, as in this instance, by the piece. The man was to provide his own material, which would support the view that he was a contractor; but he was doing the work himself, and, moreover, he was laying himself out to get a livelihood by doing work of this kind, and his usual wages, twenty to twenty-five shillings per week, were those of a laborer. His honor, therefore, concluded that the relationship of master and servant applied—but added that had the claimant not been a poor man he would have liked the case to go to appeal in order that an authoritative decision might be obtained. The result of this case is likely to increase the number of applicants for insurance protection. At the same time it can hardly fail to have the effect of considerably swelling the number of claims with which insurance companies will be called upon to deal.

THE PROPOSED DOMINION INSURANCE BILL.

Minister of Finance Introduces Government Measure in the House.

The Minister of Finance has introduced in the House the Government's new insurance bill. As details come to hand somewhat late for extended comment, THE CHRONICLE this week confines itself to a summary of the chief features of the bill as outlined by Mr. Fielding himself. There has evidently been a disposition on the part of the Government to give a fair hearing to the serious objections brought against certain of the Commission's proposals. The insurance and general press, as well as the companies themselves, have pointed out, that to blindly imitate New York legislation would be to inflict serious injury upon the public as well as to impose irksome disabilities upon insurance companies. In his concluding remarks Mr. Fielding admitted that he did not expect the bill would be acceptable to all parties, but he hoped that something approaching to a happy medium had been attained. No discussion in the House is asked at present. Instead, it is the intention to refer the bill to the Banking and Commerce Committee, so that full opportunity will be given for consideration of details, and for the hearing of any views that may be presented by company managers and others.

ENLARGED POWERS OF INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

It was explained by Mr. Fielding that the bill provided that for any violation of the provisions of the Insurance Act, the Finance Minister might withdraw a license which had already been issued, or suspend a license. The superintendent of insurance was given wider power, and was to have powers of a department minister in respect to insurance matters, and to have power enabling him to visit offices of American companies and to make inspections there. He also had power to make special valuations and rulings regarding investments of money.

TRUST FUNDS OF FOREIGN COMPANIES.

Under the present law, foreign companies are empowered to invest a portion of their moneys in Canada in hands of trustees, who are private individuals. The new bill provides that when vacancies occur in existing boards, the places shall be filled, not by private individuals, but by trust companies; and all land funds hereafter are to be placed in the hands of incorporated trust companies, and not private individuals. It was stated that there was no desire to disturb the trustees now in office.