

## Prominent Topics

### Parliament and the Insurance Report.

While the report of the Royal Commission on Insurance has been brought into considerable prominence in the House this week, it has not been on account of insurance *per se*. In the course of the personal and party discussion into which the report was drawn, the following reference to it was made by the Premier: "I have glanced through the report. I afterwards took it up to read it when I had more leisure, so as to form my own conclusion, and if I am to speak my own mind at the present moment, I must declare that I am not prepared to say what the conclusion I have come to is, and what action should be taken by the Government upon this report. I had hoped that long ere this we would be able to have the discussion, but we have not been idle in this House in the meantime, and I hope still that we may have a discussion warranted by the report before the session closes."

### London Market.

A London despatch of Wednesday evening refers as follows to market conditions there: "Money was in fair demand in the market to-day. Discounts were very firm, owing to fears of a rise in the French bank rate. On the stock exchange prices opened fairly firm. Later the improvement became more pronounced. Prices in most departments advanced on the news of the treasury relief in New York and the favourable British exchequer receipts. The volume of business was larger than yesterday. Consols advanced on investment purchases. Americans opened well above parity and continued to improve, with the exception of a slight depression at noon, until just before the close, when they eased slightly."

### The Harbour Terminals.

The Montreal Harbour Board has appointed Mr. John Vaughan of the C.P.R. as head of their new railroad traffic department, with the title of Superintendent of Terminals. The tracks along the harbour front are from now on to form a separate system, directly under the control of the Harbour Board, for the service of the various connecting roads. It is anticipated that this plan will prove more satisfactory than the old method of leasing running rights over the tracks.

During the past week Sub-Chief Tremblay, of the Montreal Fire Brigade, was made deputy chief.

The special duties devolving upon the official besides work of discipline and administration will include the attending to periodical and systematic inspections of buildings—both as to their exterior and interior conditions.

### Protecting the Schools.

It is announced that all possible speed is being made by the Protestant School Commissioners in providing improved fire protection in the Montreal schools. Kindergarten classes have for the present been disbanded in all schools where it is not feasible to arrange for their accommodation upon the first floor. Fire extinguishers have been put in place and fire drill is to be carried out more carefully. Fire escapes are being installed as quickly as possible. What is especially important is that the supervisor of physical training is to be definitely responsible for seeing that fire protection arrangements are systematically carried out in all the schools.

### London Opinion on Root Proposals.

The Standard of London refers at some length to the "amazing proposals" of the United States reported to have been made through Secretary Root to Ambassador Root for Canada's consideration. It says: "We have little hesitation in declaring that no such terms will even be considered at Ottawa, Mr. Root must not imagine that Canada is a child in these matters. No parchment need be spoiled for an agreement which the people of Canada would reject with scorn." The paper adds: "We trust, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will be able to surmount the difficulties which may prevent him attending the colonial conference."

### Taxation in the West.

Early this month the Alberta Legislature passed with a rush Premier Rutherford's bill providing for the taxation of practically all conceivable public utility and financial concerns. This week it is Saskatchewan that proposes to put special taxes on banks, insurance, loan and trust companies, telegraph, telephone and express companies, and so forth. Has the west no further use for outside capital, that it should thus hamper and discourage its legitimate investment?

### Imperial Bank Dividend.

It was announced this week that the Imperial Bank of Canada had put its stock on a basis of 11 p.c., and that a dividend at that rate has been declared for the quarter ending April 30. The Imperial has been paying 10 p.c. dividends ever since 1901.

### Liverpool to Hong Kong.

The British House of Commons has ratified the contract with the Canadian Pacific for the carrying of mails between Liverpool and Hong Kong. The contract is looked upon, however, as a temporary arrangement pending the discussion of the matter by the Colonial Conference.