

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

R. WILSON SMITH,
Proprietor.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881

JOHN T. P. KNIGHT,
Editor.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

VOL. XVIII. No. 49. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1898.

SINGLE COPY - - .10
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

The Taxation Trouble.

Many of the suggestions for increasing the civic revenue involve the introduction of a system of taxation calculated to discourage business men, and drive away capitalists who would otherwise invest money in Montreal enterprises. Some of the taxes set forth in the new charter are unwise, unworkable, and unsuitable to a great and always growing city. Montreal has, today, a system of taxation admitted to be one of the most simple and equitable of any city on the continent. *Real estate should remain the basis*, and, supplemented by water rates, reasonable business tax, and license fees from various sources, ought to be made a source of sufficient revenue for all civic purposes. Instead of searching for a new system of taxation, it would be well for those framing the new charter to devote attention to a method which, at present, bears equitably upon all classes of the community.

Trust Companies Amalgamating.

The recent rumours of amalgamation of banks, insurance and trust companies have given place to a positive statement concerning, at least, two corporations. The Toronto General Trusts' Company and the Trusts' Corporation of Ontario have decided to ask Parliament to sanction their union. The advantages to be derived from this fusion of interests were evidently made so manifest to the directors of both companies that no objections to the proposed amalgamation are expected from shareholders or parliament. The combined business of the companies thus linking their fortunes, and the economy of management resultant therefrom, ought to ensure the greatest success for this venture, and we trust it will be followed by a similar blending of other chartered corporations now engaged in unwise competition.

A Profession or a Trade.

To any one interested in the work of elevating insurance to the profession it should be, the report that a newly organized corporation styled The London and Provincial

Sickness Insurance Tea Company, Limited, of London, England, advertises that it intends to "carry on the business of tea-dealers and grocers in connection with sickness and accident insurance" will come as an unpleasant surprise. If this sort of thing is likely to continue, it will probably result in a classifying of the new profession of insurance under different heads, even as the legal profession in Great Britain consists of two separate and distinct bodies—barristers-in-law and solicitors. The eminent Queen's Counsel, as legal advocates and special pleaders, accept briefs, retainers, and refreshers from the solicitors, and the members of both branches of the profession work harmoniously together in the interests of their clients. But even the briefless barrister would hardly dream of endeavouring to obtain business by offering to rebate one-half of the counsel fee payable by the solicitor, and no legal firm would dare to combine with the business of listening to a recital of the grievances of a client the supplying of the latter with groceries and provisions. The very suggestion of such a grotesque absurdity, the very thought of rebating the retainer marked on a brief, is almost sufficient to demoralize and degrade the legal profession. At the same time, it seems equally incongruous and unfitting that an insurance company should undertake to supply tea and groceries with every policy. The advertisement does not state if the insurance business will be regarded as a surer source of profit to this curious combination than the selling of black or green tea; but the formation of The London and Provincial Sickness Insurance Tea Company is a retrograde step on the road to making insurance, as it should be, one of the learned professions. However, the men engaged in selling chests of tea with a policy attachment as a sort of a rebate on the price thereof cannot surely complain if the managers of first-class life or fire companies decline to recognize them as members of the insurance body. These peddlers of policies and Oolong should be classified with rebaters and writers of underground insurance.

If the great growth of great corporations is to result in the opening of gigantic emporiums for supply-