

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

R. WILSON SMITH,

Proprietor.

VOL. XXII. No. 5.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1902.

SINGLE COPY - - .10
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPT ON - \$: 00

Light On History From An Obscure Source.

The last volume published relating to Canadian Archives, which is a supplement to Dr. Brymner's report, contains copies of and abstracts from documents of the greatest interest relating to the history of Canada, which were found in the attic story of the Louvre, the receptacle for all manner of rubbish. The writer of the report justly says that to such papers we must look for materials of true history as contrasted with legend. A petition is referred to, sent by Sieur de Ber, Quebec, in 1676, to the King of France, praying for a title of nobility in reward for services in commencing "the dry and green cod fishery," importing and raising fruit trees into Canada, building ships and barques, and beginning the trade of shipping boards and houses from Canada to France. Whoever heard before of this remarkable man? Yet Sieur de Ber was the first founder, the pioneer, of four important enterprises that have brought great wealth to this country. He was ahead of his time and of his country's rulers, who would have put Canada forward a century or more had they encouraged or even refrained from discouraging trading enterprise. A letter of the King of France, dated 31st July, 1684, is quoted in which His Majesty snubs certain Canadians for too great zeal in pushing trade. Several documents are given of a like tenor. In one official instruction, of June 10, 1706, the Governor of Canada is told plainly not to encourage manufacturers. In the precis of a royal memorial addressed to a high official in Canada, we found a remarkable passage which reads:—

"Must not push education forward to the point of making more priests than are strictly necessary. Large numbers of conversions to Catholicism. It was this that obliged him, the King, to revoke the Edict of Nantes. Many abjurations since, must labour for attainment of a like result in Canada. If he should meet with any who are obstinate and refuse to be in-

structed, he might billet troops upon them or imprison them."

Such were the amiable customs of that era. About the same time the King of England was imprisoning several bishops for declining to be His Majesty's lacqueys. Neither country can reproach the other for repressing civil and religious liberty in these days. The above few words found recently in an attic of the Louvre, by a Canadian official investigator, throw more light on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes than is found in several quite distinguished histories. England, however, has no reason to complain of that event, as the exodus from France of capital and skilled workmen caused the establishment of manufacturers and arts in the old land which ever since have been a source of national wealth.

Building Collapses and Fires.

The collapse of buildings in the United States has become so common as to indicate grave lack of either constructive ability in American architects or the neglect of their specifications by builders, the latter also being a reflection on architects for their imperfect oversight. At this stage of the world there is no conceivable excuse for such defects in plans or materials as lead to a building collapsing. A floor in a hotel being erected in Ontario gave way by its own weight, doing serious damage. It was proved that the weight of the floor was too great for the side supports. Suppose this had happened after the hotel was finished and full of guests, scores of persons would have been killed and the affair would have been described as an "accident." The recent collapses at New York of a tenement building, and at Chicago and other American cities, are a scandal to the builders; such reckless plans are indeed criminal. The law seems unsettled as to the liability of a fire insurance company in case of a fire occurring in con-