

# The Chronicle

## Insurance & Finance.

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**Government Insurance of Canadian Transvaal Contingent.** It has been stated that \$1,000,000 of life assurance has been placed by the Government on the above contingent, each man being insured for one year for \$1,000. The insurance has been taken principally by The Standard Life, the British Empire, and the London & Lancashire. These Companies have, of course, largely re-insured in other offices.

The above matter has not yet, we are informed, been finally arranged.

**Cheap Telegraphy.** We are glad to note that the British Post Office authorities are seriously considering the question of reducing the cost of telegraphing within the United Kingdom to six cents. It is said that estimates are being prepared, and it is expected that the large increase of work will even cover the necessary addition to the expense of making a considerable augmentation of the staff. It is to be hoped such a movement will shortly find followers on this side of the Atlantic in the shape of a reduction of rates.

**A Possible Increase in Fire Rates.** Whatever other American cities may decide upon doing, it seems that Chicago fire underwriters have virtually agreed upon plans for an increase in the rates on various classes of property in their city. The heavy losses during the year have made a profit for 1899 impossible. Insurance men say, too, that for several years there has been little if any money in the local business. The underwriters are reported as saying that they believe an advance necessary upon some classes, but they desire that the matter be carefully considered and not gone into unthinkingly.

**Not Nice Reading.** Readers of the bulletin boards, on which the particulars of the serious reverse sustained by the British in Natal were given had some cold, dreary, cheerless moments on Tuesday morning last. The general gloom and prostration of mind was visible in every upraised face.

The bulletins did not make nice reading matter, and even the consolatory reflections of those who tried to make light of the disaster failed to dissipate that common, universal sorrow and mental depression which seemed to make all the uses of this world

"Weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

Pending full information of the disaster there is no room for comment. The significant admission of General White that the troops were placed by him in untenable positions will serve to disarm military critics and special correspondents who might otherwise weary their readers with enquiries and speculations as to how and why such a disaster happened.

Let us hope that the arrival of General Buller with the expected re-inforcements will be followed by a massing of the British troops for an advance on Pretoria, and that no further reverses may have to be chronicled during the present war. Later in the day a brief cablegram afforded us a glimpse of the spirit now animating the British War Office: it being stated that General Buller had been notified that three extra battalions and a field battery would leave England within ten days to replace "casualties."

The feeling of the nation was splendidly exhibited in the comment of the London "Standard" which said: "From the United States and our colonies alone we hear the voice of friendly sorrow and encouragement. But, that suffices. All others are welcome to congratulate themselves over the misfortunes of Great Britain."

The danger and worry incidental to campaigning in a country where some reliance has to be placed upon native help, is made evident by the suspicions now entertained regarding the teamsters of the mountain battery and ammunition waggons lost on Tuesday last. The "Times" says: "The dangers of Sir George White's plan are patent, even to civilians; but it is not impossible that the Cape 'boys' in charge of the mountain battery, who quite recently were suspected of disaffection, may have been tampered with by the Boers. Otherwise, such a large and comprehensive stampede is a very extraordinary occurrence from such a slight cause."