

In Montreal Also. Some American newspapers are calling attention to the belief of a prominent physician that appendicitis is frequently produced by sitting cross-legged. It is amusing to note how many similarly startling discoveries are made by the unknown great men of this world. However, this "prominent" physician who thinks he has found the cause of a modern disease in the proneness of men to seek ease in any naturally restful attitude has given some quick-witted citizens across the border a chance to warn cross-legged patrons of street cars of the danger they are courting by sitting in the way described. A New Orleans paper goes further in its desire to impress the appendicitis lesson upon street car passengers. It says:—

"The male patrons of the cars of this city might profit by the suggestion. But there are a number of fellows with "hog" written in box-car letters all over them who have another way of trying to occupy more space than they pay for, leaving others to hang on by the strap, and this is to spread their knees out as much as possible."

Strange to say, a student of character patronizing the street cars of Montreal may find fellow-passengers having this porcine peculiarity of occupying space and selfishly seeking comfort at the expense of others. But Montrealers can forgive the occasional cross-legged, knee-spreading nuisance when observing the prevalence of a gallantry that never fails. In civility and polite attention to tired work-girls and aged men and women, the male patrons of Montreal street cars cannot be outdone.

THE SCANDAL OF MODERN LIFE ASSURANCE.

In several issues of THE CHRONICLE we have been pointing out the prevalence of the rebate practice among life assurance agents in Canada, and we have shown that it is harmful to both companies and agents, especially the latter. In emphasizing the points made, we re-iterate our conviction that the evil can be cured. This desirable result could be reached by effort along two lines of action, both involving nothing but a combination of forces. First to be desired is the organization of the managers and agents of reputable companies into an association, which shall pledge its members upon honour to give no rebates, and to compete for business only by honorable methods. This organization should then be supplemented by the passage of an anti-rebate law in order to compel the few guerillas who are to be found everywhere fighting in defiance of honest rules and wholesome regulations to observe them under statutory penalties.

Voluntary pledges under the guarantee of mutual association would reduce the evil to the minimum; the authority of law could surely be made to do the rest.

A BANKING RETROSPECT OF 1898.

The year 1898 opened with brighter financial prospects than any for a lengthy period, and those anticipations were, on the whole, fulfilled. As the harvest crops of the preceding season were about being marketed, a rapid advance took place in prices, until they advanced fifty per cent. over those ruling for a number of past years. Although other conditions were favourable to the enlarged income of the country, owing to the greater value of its agricultural products, must be attributed mainly the inflow of the tide of prosperity which receded in 1893, and kept the channels of trade so long in low water. It is remarkable evidence of the general soundness of Canada's financial position that, while its neighbour, the United States, with which its affairs are closely interwoven, was severally times convulsed by panic in the past five years, this Dominion during those days of disturbance to all monetary interests never showed any sign of internal financial distress. On the other hand, when credit was shaken to its very centre in the States, the financiers of Canada were not only strong enough to hold their own steadily, but to give material assistance to Americans in need of help. To understand and realize the severity of the depression of trade from which Canada began to rally in 1897, and wholly recovered from in 1898, we may consider two facts of primary significance. In 1892-93, our merchants were so buoyant with confidence that they purchased foreign goods to the extent of \$129,074,268, which was 14 millions in excess of the average of nine preceding years. In 1895, the second year of depression, they reduced their purchases to \$110,781,682, which was 5 millions less than the average from 1884 to 1893, and \$18,292,586 less than in 1892-93. The exports in 1895 also declined heavily, falling 5 millions below those of 1893. In 1895 the average circulation of the banks fell from 2 to 3 millions below the average of 1892-93, and their discounts, which had been annually advancing, fell in 1895 about 7 millions below 1893. During that time of financial retrocession a strange phenomenon occurred, which affords one explanation of Canada's steady financial strength. While trade was declining, both domestic and foreign, as lower imports and exports, lessened circulation and discounts proved, the people of Canada were so thrifty and so prudent that, in spite of hard times, they increased their deposits in the banks which were payable after notice by 12 1-2 millions of dollars between 1893 and 1895, during two years of severe depression. Had our people not been so provident, and had they been distrustful of the banks when monetary disturbance prevailed across the border, they would have been compelled by the first condition, and induced by the other, to withdraw their deposits heavily from the banks, and Canada would have experienced grave financial trouble from which she would not have recovered so rapidly as she did from trade depression in 1898.

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