

**Rule
Britannia**

The members of that Peace Conference at The Hague are strangely silent about the present position of affairs in Europe. The Russian Czar's dream of universal peace and general disarmament led to a costly conference, and nothing more. At present, we have the Emperor of Germany so intent upon the building of a navy that he is becoming positively amiable in his attitude toward opponents of his scheme. France is equally busy in the same direction.

Last but not least, Britannia, to remove any doubt from the minds of her foreign critics as to her intention to "rule the waves" for many years to come, decided on Monday last to ask parliament for the tidy sum of \$150,000,000 in order that the British navy may be prepared for all emergencies. The First Lord of the Admiralty in introducing the naval estimates said in effect that he knew what the nation expected of her ships and sailors, and that if mobilization of the fleet should be necessary he would not hesitate to come to parliament for more money.

When we have finished shouting Rule Britannia, perhaps it would be well to drop a tear over the blight of hopes of starry-eyed Peace.

**Canadian Coal
Fields.**

The unprecedented use of coal has caused such an exceedingly active demand that the world's coal market is in a most unusual situation. Companies are stated to be in receipt of requests for quotations for shipping coal to almost all parts of the world. While this condition of things is doubtless traceable to Great Britain's war requirements, and the stocking of her various coaling stations to their full capacity as a precautionary measure in case of complications with others than President Kruger, it is also doubtless due in part to the almost universal boom in industrial activity. The Canadian coal fields are increasing in value year by year, and all the energies of our people ought to be devoted to mining the "dusky diamonds" known to exist in Cape Breton, British Columbia, and many districts yet untouched by the miner's pick.

If the world is threatened, as some would have us believe, with a coal famine, greater efforts must be made to increase the output of every mine in the Dominion of Canada. Let us make the most of our golden opportunities. It is estimated that the British Government had since the South African war been shipped between 200,000 and 300,000 tons of coal.

**Interesting
Insurance Case.**

No romance, no tale of thrilling and extravagant adventure can equal some of the stories produced from the prosaic business of life insurance. During the last two years sensational trials on both sides of the Atlantic have served to show that from the experience of the underwriter can be gleaned all the material for

a modern novel illustrating some of the strongest incentives to murderous action:—love, jealousy, hate, cupidity, and every powerful passion.

In this issue of THE CHRONICLE we publish an abstract of the judgment in the interesting appeal of the Standard Life Assurance Company against the heirs of Isidore Poirier, the particulars of whose murder by wife and her paramour must still be fresh in the minds of Montrealers.

The judgment in question is based upon the opinion of the majority of the judges that the evidence pointing to the wife as the agent of her husband in effecting the insurance on his behalf was inconclusive. They also held that no absolute proof has been produced of her purpose or murderous design at the date of application for insurance. But even if the Court has held that the insurance was effected by the murdered man himself, who was, of course, ignorant of any plot against his life on the part of his guilty wife, the Standard Life Assurance Company was quite justified in contesting such a claim. A legal mind may find no proof of this woman's purpose in her letter to the company asking if the policy would be paid should her husband be poisoned, but any ordinary layman will entertain little doubt of Cordelia Viau's design at the date of said letter.

However, we can only commend the Standard Life for contesting such a claim, and we venture to express the hope that, if any point of law remains upon which hangs the possibility of a different decision to the one rendered, they will avail themselves thereof, and, in the interest of insurance companies and for the safety of society at large, carry this interesting case to further appeal.

PHOENIX INSURANCE CO. OF HARTFORD.

The 91st semi-annual statement of this popular and prosperous company shows an increase in surplus to policy-holders, since our review of its financial exhibit of a year ago, amounting to \$39,119.70. Such a result in a year remarkably depressing to many fire underwriters, speaks eloquently on behalf of the policy of prudence and safety, for pursuing which the company presided over by Mr. D. W. C. Skilton has been so frequently commended.

The assets available for fire losses amount to \$5,523,649.70; the reserve for outstanding losses is \$271,196.59, a slight decrease since January, 1899; the reserve for re-insurance is \$2,029,575.53, an increase exceeding \$20,000, and the total sum paid for losses incurred since the organization of the company is rapidly approaching the forty-five million mark.

A glance at the financial statement of the company, published elsewhere in this issue, will satisfy any policy-holder in the Phoenix as to its strength and solidity. Mr. J. W. Tatley, manager of the Canadian department, has good reason to feel proud of the reputation of the company he represents.