

One reason given by some Insurance men for not wishing to join a combination, is lack of Good Faith among some of those who would form it. We cannot call to mind at the present moment any glaring case of bad faith on the part of any Insurance Manager or prominent Agent, nor do we wish to, though we well know that such have occurred, and we venture to assert that many cases reported are but supposititious, and have had their growth in the heated imagination of some excited underwriter unfortunate enough to drop a fat premium to the skill of a more successful rival. We have seen very few cases actually proved, and many of them that look rather black at first, are the result of misunderstanding. It is a disagreeable duty to bring a charge of bad faith and violation of pledge against a *confrere*, and unless there is the fullest ground for suspicion and well-founded evidence, it is better left alone; but the member of a combination who really knows of such a case, and fails to take vigorous action in the matter is no better than,—and in fact is—a compounder of a moral felony.

The man who enters into a solemn compact to carry out certain business principles for the general good, and then for his own individual gain, shatters his pledge, deserves the scorn of his fellow men. Ireland has given us a grand punishment for such a character, we utter the potential hibernianism, "Boycott" him.

GOVERNMENT LIFE ASSURANCE.

Thinking it may interest our readers, we will here give a brief summary of the principal attempts which have been made by Governments to transact the business of Life Assurance. In view of the urgent demands made on our Government, a few years ago, to take the matter in hand, it cannot but be instructive to note the history of similar enterprises in other countries.

Holland was the first country to raise money by issuing Life Annuities, in 1554. Several other Governments have followed the example, notably England, and the practise is, to a certain extent, popular, as absolute certainty is guaranteed, and there is no special demand for energetic or careful management. However, the granting of Annuities is hardly within the scope of the present article, and we shall say nothing further on that subject.

In 1807 a scheme for the establishment, under Government patronage, of a Company to be called "The Poor Assurance Office," to promote habits of thrift among the laboring classes, was introduced in the English Parliament. Nothing further seems to have been done about it.

In 1829 a slight reference was again made to it in the Act relating to Government Annuities.

In 1853 the National Debt Commissioners were empowered to grant Assurances of not more than £100 to persons who also bought Annuities. This was the real beginning of the system of Government Life Assurance.

In 1858 Dr. Farr published a circular advocating the further adoption of the scheme by the authorities, but

was unsuccessful. However, some of the suggestions contained in his paper gave rise to the "Consols Assurance," which is now practised in a modified form by the "Positive Government Security Life Company."

In the year 1864 the plan of Government Assurance was fully developed, and put in working order in England. The following table shows the number of policies issued, and the amounts assured annually:—

YEARS.	NO. OF POLICIES.	AMOUNT.
1865.....	547	£40,647
1866.....	621	47,261
1867.....	364	26,989
1868.....	350	26,781
1869.....	422	32,670
1870.....	385	31,254
1871.....	358	27,695
1872.....	757	55,982
1873.....	396	33,073
1874.....	278	21,621
1875.....	370	32,022
1876.....	270	22,875
1877.....	393	33,444
1878.....	229	19,608
Total	5,740	£451,922

Thus the policies issued, instead of increasing annually, were in 1878 less than one-half of what they were in 1865. The amount assured in that year is less than what is carried on their individual lives by many Canadians!—\$95,000. In view of these facts the scheme must be admitted as a complete failure.

In 1868 the French Government passed an Act very similar to the English one. It also has utterly failed. The whole amount assured at the beginning of 1878 was less than \$200,000, and the new policies, out of 40,000,000 of people, \$15,000!!

In 1869 New Zealand engaged in the business, and of all the various projects of the kind it only has succeeded to any extent. The Government of this Colony, as is well known, are in a very needy condition, and as the people are already taxed almost out of existence, it is hard to see how they will be able to meet their enormous indebtedness. Their credit is so low that it is almost more than doubtful if they can borrow more. It thus remains an open question as to whether it is as desirable to place the investments of the provident in such shaky stock or in a sound, well managed private corporation.

In 1871 Denmark introduced the plan, but, so far as we can learn, it also has made a decided failure.

There have been rumors of late that Bismarck intends, or thought of buying out the German Life Companies. This, however, will probably not be heard of again.

We thus see that almost without exception every Government which has engaged in the business has utterly failed to make a success of it. It is against all experience that States should conduct any financial undertakings with the energy and care shown by private corporations. We hope then in Canada we have heard the last of this matter, and that our Government will never interfere with private enterprise, in this line at least.