

heavy and arbitrary import tax were being levied on them, there might be some show of reason for their opposition. Nothing of that kind is being attempted. The Bill simply requires that American securities to the current value of existing risks in Canadian lives shall be held by trustees in Canada, for the safe-keeping of which we apprehend the Government would consider itself responsible. The same measure applies with equal force to our own Companies. It, therefore, seems somewhat presumptuous in Foreign Companies to demand a more lenient policy than that accorded to our Home institutions.

And here the questions naturally occur: what are the reserves of a life company, and where is the ownership thereof? The simple answer is that they represent that part of the premium paid by members which the company has saved wherewith to pay claims as these mature. Mutual Companies have no Reserves or Assets other than the premiums of policy-holders and their accretions. These institutions are thus simply Boards of Trustees holding, as in a Savings Bank, the deposits of the membership for the common good. For these and other reasons Sheppard Homans, and many other eminent American Actuaries and Companies too, claim that the Reserves are the property of the individual members. Canadians policy-holders are thus shown to have a right to have control of that fund specially created by their own yearly contributions, and which now exceeds \$5,000,000. Is it unreasonable that they should ask to have their accumulations protected by our own Government? The American Companies would continue to secure our gold in payment of premiums and to invest the same in American enterprises, and the Bill provides that two men of their own choosing shall be constituted under the Government the custodians of American scrip. The American Companies and people shall continue as heretofore to reap the entire benefit from the transactions, while we would have the onus and trouble of caring for their Bonds.

If these Mutuals labor under disabilities resulting from the Constitution of their charters, let them seek redress from Congress. That certainly would be a much more befitting course for them than to interfere with the legislature of this country. Are our laws to be framed with a special view to suit the crotchets of foreigners? Shall the dignity and independence of our Legislation be thus quietly invaded by having the terms and provisions of our statutes dictated by private citizens of the United States?

That the measure should be retro-active, we think is quite necessary. Unlike ordinary commercial transactions a life policy is not terminable in a year or two, but may extend over half a century. And will it be claimed that current legislation should not affect even the outer and non-essential relations of such a contract. In its present shape the Bill would ensure greater security to our assured, although perhaps a few modifications should be granted, such as would not alter its value in this respect; and we think it is incumbent on our Government to exact from all companies doing business here such pledge as will amply protect the interests at stake. We may have something to say on the subject of the standard of valuation in another issue.

#### THE NIAGARA DISTRICT INSURANCE CO.

The thirty-ninth annual report of this Company, which appeared in our issue of the 10th inst., must have been satisfactory reading to its numerous friends as well as to the stockholders. It is gratifying to see that this popular institution is not only progressing favorably on the road to prosperity, but that in order to allow no opportunity for attack, as well as to afford still greater security to its patrons, a guarantee stock has been formed under Act of Parliament, and through which the immediate adjustment of all losses will be secured. This excellent feature places the Niagara District now among the foremost of Canadian Fire Insurance Companies, and there can be little doubt of its greatly promoting the interests of the stockholders, while ample confidence is felt by the insured. Let the other Mutuals follow the example of the Niagara District Company, and we shall hear less abuse of this system of Fire Insurance. We can speak with confidence of the management of the Montreal branch, and need say nothing more than this, that there is always room for well-directed energy.

IMPERIAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY OF LONDON, ENGLAND.—The annual statement of this Company will be found in our advertising pages. It will be seen that the Company, after paying the usual dividend, has added out of the year's business £99,449 sterling to the rest which now amounts to £560,798 stg. The policy of the Imperial, in strengthening its position against possible emergencies, cannot be too highly commended, and is worthy of imitation by some of our new and enterprising Canadian Companies. The Imperial Fire, as an old chartered Company (not limited) transacting no life

business, is not required by law to publish or file any general statement of its affairs. The exhibit which appears to-day is, therefore, a voluntary one, and is published for the satisfaction of the friends and policy holders of this eminently reliable Company.

#### THE LIFE INSURANCE BILL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

OTTAWA, March 14th, 1876.

On Monday last a deputation from the head offices of the American Life Insurance Companies transacting business in Canada visited Ottawa, and had an interview with Prof. Cherriman and Hon. Mr. Cartwright in reference to some of the clauses of the proposed Life Insurance Act. All the Companies except the Atlantic Mutual were represented by officers or Canadian managers, and Charlton F. Lewis, the able Secretary of the Chamber of Life Insurance, was chosen Chairman. Mr. Cartwright gave the deputation a very respectful hearing, and as the result, it is understood that some of the provisions will be considerably modified in their scope. It was shewn to be impossible that some, at least, of the American companies should comply with the bill as originally drawn, owing to the mutual character of their charters. The twelve American companies have in force in Canada about forty-five millions of dollars in policy amount, being over one-half the entire life insurance of the Dominion. The bill, it is understood, will be laid before Parliament next week.

R.

#### MESSRS. FERRIER & CO.

The following is taken from the special report of the business of this firm from 31st Dec., 1851, to 7th February, 1876, prepared by Mr. Edward Evans, official assignee:

The firm of Bryson & Ferriers dissolved on 15th April, 1851. It does not appear from the books that Mr. Bryson took anything out; the capital of the firm consisted of \$36,279.15, being a loan by the Hon. James Ferrier, and upon which the firm paid interest regularly up to date of dissolution. From this date until Jan. 1st, 1858, Messrs. James and George Ferrier continued business, under the firm name of Ferrier & Co., ostensibly in co-partnership, but in reality with the understanding that the wholesale business was the sole property of Mr. James, and the retail of Mr. George D. Ferrier. At the close of the year 1857 the retail business was wound up, and the present co-partnership formed on the basis of each having an equal interest in the wholesale business, it being arranged, however, that any losses arising from the collection of the book accounts of either business should be charged to the personal accounts of the respective proprietors. The capital at this date, amounting to \$102,560, was entirely the surplus of the wholesale business, that of the retail having been altogether absorbed in losses. Mr. James carried \$16,000 to the credit of his brother's capital account, from his own, leaving himself a balance of \$86,560. This capital was the result of profits made to date, added to the \$36,000 capital at