chere and Madawaska, empty into the Ottawa. The sources are near together; two of them, Island Lake, which starts the Muskoka, and Otter Slide Lake, the head of the Petewawa, are not half a mile apart. The height of each is over fourteen hundred feet (1,405 85-100) above the sea level.

Fish abounds in the waters, which include the great Opeongo lake. Here the momentary idler, snatching a short repose from exhausting business and toil, could amuse himself with fishing in the assurance that he would meet with fair success. The preservation of this forest would undoubtedly have an important influence on the rain-fall; its destruction would lessen precipitation and decrease the volume of the rivers.

As the author of the pamphlet is on the staff of the Crown Lands department, its publication is probably intended to feel the public pulse on the proposals made. The response can scarcely fail to be favorable. In any case an expression of public opinion will be evoked, and it will be useful as a guide to the government in making or refusing to make the proposal official.

The same kind of duty the Federal Government is going to perform, on a scale befitting the whole Dominion, amid the enchanting scenery of the Rocky Mountains, where nature displays herself on a colossal scale. The site of the new national park of the Dominion, now understood to be under survey, is in the neighborhood of Banff, on the Canadian Pacific. The prime condition of accessibility will therefore be secured. The two projects will, in some measure, mutually support one another; for, though each will be sustained on its own special grounds, the prime element of the national park is common to both.

ASSESSMENT ASSURANCE.

Mr. Lewis' letter in a previous issue, as to the cost of assessment assurance in connection with the London Masonic Mutual Benefit Association, does not question the correctness of the figures we gave in our issue of 13th August, as to that society's increasing death rate. He says, however, that in September, 1884, he shewed, in our columns, that "the average cost for thirteen years was $11 including expenses." Our figures showed nearly the same thing up to that point, but since then what has been the cost? In 1884 it was $14.15 and in 1885 went up to $18.10, and a like number of deaths falling on the present reduced membership for 1886 will make it $20 this year, apart from expenses.

Mr. Lewis thinks that if an increasing death cost in an assessment society indicates a "downward road to inevitable disaster," as we stated, then disaster must overtake the insurance companies also. We demur and deny. A life insurance company is a corporation which makes such a provision for the increasing death loss that it can pay the last man as fully as the first one, or the middle one, even if it received no new members, and if the old ones dropped out quite as fast as they usually do from assessment societies. The increasing death rate in an assessment society finds that body unprepared to do anything except make loud calls on its members to hand over more and more of the reserves which they have been keeping in their pockets. These calls receive little attention from the young and healthy, because, as we showed in the article of Aug. 8th, 1884, they can get permanent insurance in regular companies, with millions to back their promises, at a less price. Therefore the young members drop out and leave the aged and diseased to pay their own losses, as witness the end of the Oddfellows' Mutual Benefit of Pennsylvania, whose figures for eleven years past we gave the 13th of last month. We repeat these for the years 1874-5, 1880 and 1883-4:—

MONTROSE ODDFELLOWS' MUTUAL.

Year.	New Members.	Total Members.	No. of Deaths.	Cost per $1,000
1874.....	207	1688	11	$6.51
1875.....	241	1802	17	9.21
1880.....	6	846	23	27.18
1883.....	0	282	13	46.04
1884.. :..	0	127	11	86.61
1885.....	Dead.			

The insurance, if it can be called by that name, was cheaper in that society than in Mr. Lewis' up to 1879. but then became costly. The healthy members therefore began to leave, and the total members to diminish annually. Both the latter things have been occurring in Mr. Lewis' society pretty rapidly of late, as the following statement will shew:—

LONDON MASONIC MUTUAL

Year.	Members.	Deaths.	Cost.
1874	1960	16	$ 8.10
1875.....	2250	26	11.50
1880.....	1475	27	18.31
1883.....	1492	26	17.40
1885.....	1436	26	18.10
1886.....	1401	—	20.00

Mr. Lewis claims that his society has a large reserve. Perhaps it is large for an assessment society to have, but it is only $50,000 according to the 1886 report, and therefore ridiculously inadequate. The age of those members who died last year—one of them 72—shews an average age now of 55 all round. Upon 1,400 persons insured ten years ago at age of 45, the 4½ % reserve required by law to show a company solvent is, in round figures, $308,450. That is, supposing each certificate or policy to be $1,200, and the full regular premium of an insurance company to be payable hereafter, that premium, according to the Canada's without-profit rates, is $38.04. If Mr. Lewis' society, only gets half of $28.20 and less as he claims, then if he were to ask some responsible company to re-insure his 1,400 members for $1,200 each, we apprehend he would find its treasury short at the present time, nearly $500,000 in round figures. With $1,680,000 of certificates in the hands of 1,400 people the gross debt is $1,680,000. At age 55, claims must come in rapidly, as the average expectancy of each life is seventeen years. With $50,000 in hand, the balance to pay is $1,630,000 and this sum, paid by 1,400 persons in seventeen years, requires that each shall pay in a total of $1,164 or an average per annum of $68.48. Interest at 6% on the $50,000 would yield a dividend upon this of $2.14 per member, per annum, leaving $66.33 as the annual assessment upon each member, supposing no deaths to happen for the seventeen years. If half the 1,400 should die in ten years, then the assessments upon the remainder must be so much heavier. We advise Mr. Lewis to consult an actuary and ascertain at what price his society could re-insure its risks.

GOLD AND DIAMONDS AT THE CAPE.

A letter from a Canadian who went a year or two ago to the diamond fields of South Africa, gives an encouraging account of that region. For its agricultural capabilities the country is not much prized, though it produces some good wine; and, it appears, the country is a desert, but it is rich in minerals, as the gold fields of the Transvaal and the diamond fields around Kimberley attest. According to our correspondent, the diamond companies are all doing well. A diamond company's stock which twelve months ago could have been bought at £35 to £37 10s. for the £100 share and to-day will readily bring £165 per share. This, too, after having divided amongst its shareholders nearly fifty per cent. The shares of Transvaal Gold Co., with £7 paid, are now quoted, we are told, at £13 15s. to £14 in the London market and at £14 10s. locally. This company pays from 10 to 15 per cent. The search for diamonds must be an exciting occupation, not to say feverish. The Kimberley *Advertiser* of August 14th gives account of the finding, that week, in the wash-up of the Eldorado Company two large diamonds of very fair quality, one being of 89 carats and the other of 47 carats. Such finds as these mean thousands of pounds. In the picking in the claims on the same day one of 17 carats was also found, which should be worth hundreds of pounds, and these, we are further informed, "followed the splendid finds in the Dutoitspan Mine the week before." The largest of these three gems, supposing them to be reduced in weight one-half, or perhaps one should say two-thirds, by cutting, would be worth, if first-class in water and shape, well up into the thousands sterling. The largest diamond ever found in the world weighed 367 carats—a carat is equal to 3⅛ Troy grains, that is there are 151½ carats to an ounce Troy weight. And the largest produced, so far as we know, by the South African fields was the "Stewart" diamond of 288 carats, found in the Vaal river in 1872. Since then, or more accurately since the discovery of diamonds in these fields by the Boers in 1867, from fifteen to twenty million pounds sterling worth of these precious stones has been obtained from them. There are announcements up to last month of continued finds of alluvial fields. One telegram speaks of an alluvial deposit found in the Waterbery district, another says, "reports are current that alluvial fields have been discovered at Gotsrand," and there are "promising indications of the existence of gold in payable quantities near Klerksdorp."

Shareholders in both the Bultfontein and the Dutoitspan districts may, that journal concludes, look forward to a steady payment of dividends on capital. Still, a strong word of caution is uttered editorially. Referring to the whole of Kimberley