

nists or Americans. An increase of prosperity leads at once to an increase of consumption; and the consumption often goes on undiminished after adverse times have set in, thus entailing an inevitable destruction of capital. There are multitudes of Anglo-Saxons who consume as much in bad years—or other public disorders—as in good years; the Frenchman betakes himself to retrenchment at once, and then the whole commercial world is surprised at the economical strength he displays. England and America have often made the discovery to their astonishment that they have been spending not income but capital; that they not only have not saved when there was nothing to save, but have continued their rate of consumption, and on pay-day, be it for the nation or the individual, have to learn amidst suffering that their property is less than it was. Debts have been contracted, means to meet them have vanished, bills are not paid, great firms break” and commercial disaster becomes more or less general.

Some of the capital now lying idle in our banks could be appropriately used for investment in permanent works, such as drainage systems in districts which contain a large amount of good land drowned as effectually for purposes of cultivation as if under water all the year. It is true that the cleared farms in the vicinity are assisting year by year in the process of drying these swamps, but a more natural process, and a more profitable one, would be to plant trees on the uplands, and open drainage on the lowlands; money laid out on loans for this purpose would be quite secure and its returns, though slow, could be relied on. In Ontario, and not only in that Province but in others, there is a large extent of waste land yet to be reclaimed by drainage.

The establishment of cheese and butter factories should be encouraged. If many of those who are attempting to organize new banks, new paper manufactories, new insurance and other joint stock companies (of which there is a repletion already) would turn their attention a little more to the soil, which is the foundation of all our wealth, they would readily receive all reasonable assistance from banks.

There is no reason why many of the English loans to municipalities and to the governments should not be effected from sources within the country, thus saving from exportation the interest we pay out annually to foreign countries, so that, if we do owe money and pay for it, we would owe and pay for it to ourselves. The recent loan effected by the city from the

Bank of Montreal is an instance of what may be done in this way, and thus a large share of the surplus funds now lying idle in the banks could be made effective in use; of course a comparatively large balance of the money lying *inert* is waiting to move the wheels of trade, but there is a danger that an accumulation will bring on the same eagerness to invest, and the same inflation of business, and consequent depression, from which we now wish to rise.

THE INSURANCE REPORT, (LIFE).

The Report of the Insurance Commissioner for 1875, to which we referred in our last issue, contains a large amount of well arranged statistical information ranging from 1869 to the present year. Altogether it is a much more complete and creditable affair than was ever before published by our insurance department, and therefore reflects credit on the Superintendent. Some severe comments have been indulged in on the tardiness of the Department in sending out the Returns. It is very desirable to have them as early as possible, but we do not think it quite fair to lecture our Superintendent for not being as prompt to the very day as the New York Bureau, where the system has been in thorough organization and working order for many years. A little time and patience will doubtless rectify it in this respect.

We copy the new business of the Life Branch from the yearly summaries supplied in the Report. It will be interesting to our readers as showing the enormous and steady increase of the business of Life Insurance throughout the country, which every true philanthropist and well-wisher to the country will heartily rejoice to know:

The new business effected in the several years are grouped thus:

No. of Policies New.	Amount of New Policies.	Premiums for the year.
1869.....6,503	\$12,854,132	\$1,238,359
1870.....6,956	12,191,696	1,464,347
1871.....7,407	13,322,626	1,852,974
1872.....11,326	21,070,101	2,265,522
1873.....11,808	21,053,618	2,597,658
1874.....11,754	19,108,221	2,844,410
1875.....9,954	14,734,381	2,868,599

Before commenting on this interesting table, we shall give a similar view of the progress for the same period of the Canadian, British, and American Companies separately. We must content ourselves with giving the sums assured only, as our space will not admit of our giving more.

	1869.	1870.	1871.
Canadian.....	\$1,156,855	\$1,584,456	\$2,623,944
British.....	2,627,392	1,657,493	2,212,197
American.....	9,069,885	8,952,747	8,486,575
	1872.	1873.	1874.
Can.....	5,276,859	4,608,913	5,259,822
Brit.....	1,896,635	1,704,338	2,143,080
Amer.....	13,896,587	14,740,367	11,705,319

The increase in 1872 was certainly very remarkable, being equal to 53 per cent. on that of the previous year. The American companies gained 64 per cent. and Canadians over 100 per cent. The enormous increase in the latter class was doubtless owing to the energy and vigor of the Canadian companies, many of which were started the year before. But the most remarkable feature in the above table is the decrease sustained in 1875. The actual reduction for the year being \$4,373,840. The depressed state of trade will doubtless be regarded, and correctly so, as being the chief cause of that falling off, for there is no branch of business more dependent than Life Insurance on the general prosperity of the country. It may perhaps be questioned whether it be in any degree chargeable to a withdrawal of confidence from some foreign companies. The unadvisability of continuing the annual draft on the country's resources arising from exportation of gold for Life Premiums to the United States has been so much and persistently agitated of late, that we should not wonder if it is beginning to have some effect. The idea receives considerable support and credibility from the fact that although there was a general falling off in all these classes, by far the largest decrease was sustained by American Companies. The actual being

		Rate of decrease to business of 1874.
Canadian.....	\$182,221	0.03
British.....	528,194	0.24
American.....	3,663,425	0.31

As Canadian Journalists we must congratulate our Home Companies on the strong hold they are evidently taking in the confidence and support of the public, and our British companies for that stability and honorable management which has always so eminently characterized them, and which no pernicious example, no matter how tempting it be meantime, will induce them to endanger.

We hope the worst of the commercial depression is over, and that summer and navigation will give new life and activity to business, and that in the general improvement our Life Companies may have a full share. We shall defer to a future number any reference to the abstract of the Fire and Marine Insurance Reports. There are one or two inaccuracies that detract from the merit of this part of the work, which it would be well to amend in the detailed report yet to issue, and which will doubtless suggest themselves to the Commissioner.