

**LIFE ASSURANCE IN CANADA.**

Canadian belief in Life Assurance is evidenced by the statement just issued by the Superintendent of Insurance. The population of the Dominion is probably in the vicinity of six millions. The payment of \$11,848,347 in premiums for life assurance in 1898 would indicate that these people are thrifty and sensible of the wisdom of providing the best kind of protection for those dependent upon them. The total amount of policies issued in 1898 was \$54,270,775, and the number of policies was 96,753. The net amount of insurance in force at the end of the year was \$363,018,138. The amount returned to policy-holders by the companies for death claims and matured endowments in the year 1898 was \$4,764,453.

Of the total premiums \$7,116,089 were received by Canadian offices, \$1,172,945 by British, and \$3,559,313 by American. Of the total policies issued, Canadian offices wrote \$35,190,534; British \$3,337,857, and American \$15,742,834. These figures cover Canadian business only. A perusal of the tabulated statement published herewith will be interesting.

In addition to the above, the companies operating on the assessment or temporary plans of insurance received \$1,612,824 in premiums for \$15,418,455 in certificates. The readers of THE CHRONICLE have been made aware of our views regarding assessment insurance. It can only be regarded as of a temporary nature, and the collapse of such a large number of corporations operating on this system ought to be a warning to those requiring absolute protection for their near and dear ones.

**THE DESTINIES OF LIFE OFFICES.**

Should Directors have the Absolute Control of Same ?

A couple of notices in the Canada "Gazette" have concentrated attention upon a subject of more than ordinary interest to the immense body of policy-holders in the life assurance companies transacting business in the Dominion of Canada. One of said notices states that: "The Canada Life Assurance Company" will apply for an act 'to provide for giving to policy-holders in the company a fair and reasonable representation on the board of directors, and for such amendments to the company's acts as may be necessary therefor.' The second notice is from a firm of solicitors 'on behalf of stock-holders and policy holders in the Canada Life Assurance Company for an act to amend the acts relating to said company so as to restore the proviso to the 7th section of the act incorporating the said company (12th Vic., chap. 168), whereby the number of votes of any one stockholder in person or by proxy was limited to forty votes. To declare the number of directors, their qualification and by whom, when and in what manner they shall be elected. To provide for the representation of policyholders on the board and in the election of directors and at general meetings. To prohibit the election and the acting as a director of any person who does not own absolutely in his own right the

stock upon which he qualifies. To prohibit the splitting of stock holdings for the purpose of evading the statutory limitations of votes and to disqualify as voters and directors the persons party thereto. To prohibit any official, medical officer, solicitor, counsel or agent of the company from being a director. To fix a date after the passing of such amending act when a general meeting shall be held for the election of a full board of directors pursuant to the act as amended."

In the consideration of a matter of such unusual importance, it is absolutely necessary that no recent occurrence should be permitted to warp the judgment of those to whom this question will be submitted. We are all too much concerned in the prosperity of our insurance companies to permit their welfare to be jeopardized by frequent changes in management, owing to the whims of discontented policy-holders or the aspirations of ambitious stock-holders. But if at any time those having the control of an enterprise deem it wise to suggest amalgamation as a means of increasing its power and usefulness, it is quite possible that such believers in the time-worn adage, that in union is strength, are perfectly sincere, and their views are therefore deserving of our careful consideration. It must not be forgotten, however, that to keep abreast of the times it is essential that we should realize that with age comes added responsibilities, and that the growth of keen competition may well render a policy once considered broad and sound much too narrow for the purposes of to-day.

In the infancy of our insurance companies, it was not necessary to give much thought to the possible coming of a time when the over-shadowing interest of policy-holders would entitle them to a voice in the administration of the companies' affairs. But the extraordinary accumulation of money, so peculiarly a feature of the successful life assurance companies, fully warrants the contention that in the control and disposition of said money the policy-holders contributing same should have representation. It is admitted that a life assurance company does not require a very large capital. In the case of the Canada Life the paid-up capital only amounts to \$125,000, while the annual income now amounts to \$3,000,000, and its assets exceed \$20,000,000. That the holders of this \$125,000 of stock should have absolute control of the destiny of the Canada Life will hardly be maintained by the stoutest advocate of those who believe in giving to the founders of an enterprise the sole conduct of its affairs. Hence it is not surprising to find policy-holders in our life assurance companies are applying to Parliament to give them "a fair and reasonable representation" on the directorates of the companies in the prosperity of which they are so deeply interested. No one will dispute the right of the stock-holders to a fair share of the profits of any life company; but an ever-increasing army of policy-holders will be found ready to question the wisdom of retaining on the Dominion Statutes any law giving to these stock-holders absolute power in all matters affecting the best interests of the insured.