

Ottawa and Kingston succeeding in this special taxation business, will lead other cities, towns and villages to imitate them, and the Insurance Companies would then have to meet no inconsiderable additional drain on their premium revenue. We rather think the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association will be equal to the situation, for at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in Toronto on the 23rd instant, this question of municipal taxation will be considered, and, if necessary, legislated on.

We suppose if a member of any civic corporation imposing such a special tax were asked to show the reasonableness of the thing, he would reply that Insurance Companies benefitted greatly by the waterworks, steam fire engines, general fire appliances, police, etc., which his town provided, and that they should fairly be asked to contribute to the support of such costly provision. Now the Insurance Companies have really no interest in the providing and maintenance of fire appliances, for the reason that where they exist they recognize them by a lowered rate, and where they do not exist they recognize their absence by a greatly increased rate, corresponding to the hazard. It is a very popular error to expect companies to contribute directly to the support of fire brigades, steam fire engines, etc., when, as soon as these are established in any place hitherto without them, down go the rates, and we think such a result generally constitutes a very handsome contribution, if the figures could be shown. Besides, why should insurance companies be asked to contribute to the maintenance of a fire brigade, etc., for the protection of the property of those who do not insure at all, and there are also a great many whose property is only partially insured.

Again, he would refer to the large aggregate of premium withdrawn yearly from his town by the insurance people. *That*, would always be prominent in his mind of course, but the aggregate losses of twelve years past or the possibility of a large conflagration in the near future would not be so prominent.

We hope the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association will not dissolve without unanimous, effective action being resolved on, should this municipal taxation scheme be pressed. We cannot conclude without referring to the great convenience the Companies enjoy in possessing an organization such as the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association in working order, and ready to cope on the instant with any threatened evil, and enabling them to act with the force and emphasis that a united organization can always bring to bear for the general weal. We shall refer to this subject again.

#### SUN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

There is no class of business so sensitive to adverse criticism as Life Assurance. The faintest breath of suspicion, even though there be not the slightest foundation for it, has an injurious effect on it. We are sorry, therefore, to see that prominence has been given in a few of the daily papers to the Sun Life Assurance Company, and the fact that it holds some stock in the defunct Exchange Bank. We have made enquiry, and find that at the time of the failure of the Exchange Bank the Sun Life held only \$5000 of its stock, and thus, even if the double liability were called up, the total loss

is comparatively almost nothing to a company of the size of the Sun. The loan of \$20,000 on the stock, which appears in the Government returns as existing on 31st December, 1882, was made to a wealthy broker, and was paid off in full about the 1st of April, 1883, long before any trouble had been seen in connection with the Bank at all. There is thus no foundation for the stories which have been circulated. They are none the less to be deplored however, for, with people who do not know the facts, they may do harm.

We have watched the progress of the Sun Life year by year with much satisfaction. It has been steadily and rapidly gaining in size and strength, and it now holds a very high position with the public as a prosperous and solid Canadian life Company. The liberal course it has taken in regard to the conditions of its policies, and the honorable manner in which it has transacted its business, have made it deservedly popular. The high esteem in which Mr. Macaulay, the Managing-Director, is held, is the best possible guarantee that can be given as to the carefulness and prudence of the management; and from our personal knowledge of the officials we certainly have no hesitation in recommending the Company most heartily.

#### WHEN DOES THE LIABILITY OF A FIRE INSURANCE POLICY TERMINATE, STANDARD TIME?

A very interesting question has recently arisen among the fire underwriters across the line, which is worthy of some discussion, as the same points may at any time happen in the Dominion, the liability of the insurers in this case hangs upon the time at which the fire occurred; and whether such time will be measured by the "new standard," recently adopted, or by the old standard of solar time. The facts are as follows: A barn was recently discovered to be on fire at 11.55 a.m., standard time, or 12.11 p.m., solar time. One policy was to expire at 12 o'clock noon on that day and a policy in another Office was to commence on the expiration of the first, that is, at 12 o'clock noon. The question as to which standard of time shall rule can only be for the courts to decide, hence there is no discussion thereon. But, under the supposition that the new time is to rule, and the fire being first discovered five minutes before the expiration of policy number *one*, the question is: What would be its liability, would it cease with the moment of expiration of time under the terms of the policy, or would it be liable up to the close of the fire?

As to policy number *two*, the question is: Inasmuch as a fire had commenced upon the premises before the time at which it was, by its terms, to assume the risk, is the *burning* building the risk it agreed to assume? If so, what portion of the loss is it liable for?

Unfortunately, in the discussion of the subject, we can gain nothing in the way of direct legal adjudications in the Dominion upon the point, though we get some little light thereupon, inferentially, from decisions made in England and in the States where the principles involved have been ruled upon.