

ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE.

We are pleased to announce that the Royal Exchange Assurance has decided to commence fire insurance business in Canada. It will be remembered that Mr. E. B. Hiles, fire manager, recently visited Canada, and made a tour of the Dominion from Halifax to Vancouver. The result of his visit being that the corporation is, as stated, opening up business in Canada.

The Canadian Head Office will be at Montreal. Mr. Arthur Barry has been appointed manager for the Dominion. Mr. Barry has been in the fire insurance business since 1887; first with the North British & Mercantile, and subsequently with the Phoenix of London. He has had over 12 years experience as inspector, and is well known throughout the Dominion. We join with Mr. Barry's many friends in offering our congratulations upon his appointment as Canadian manager of this old and wealthy office.

The Royal Exchange was founded in the year 1720, in the reign of George 1st. Its present governor is Sir Nevile Lubbock, K.C.M.G., who has associated with him Charles Seymour Grenfell, sub-governor, and G. F. Malcomson, deputy governor, and a strong representative board of directors.

For the year 1908, the latest period for which we have figures, the gross revenue of the corporation was \$7,783,420. At the close of the same year its assets were \$27,239,454. In the case of both gross revenue and assets \$5 have been taken as equal to £1 sterling.

**STATE INSURANCE IN GREAT BRITAIN.****A Difficult Problem.**

In the British House of Commons, two or three weeks ago, Mr. Asquith announced that the British Government's bill to enact State insurance against sickness and invalidity had been prepared, but that he feared that in the circumstances of the present session, it would not be possible to introduce it this year. This is the second delay to which the Bill has been subjected since the original proposal was that it should be introduced in the fall of last year.

The British Government set out upon the problem of state insurance in the same light-hearted fashion that it tackled the question of old age pensions. In the latter instance, it will be remembered, the Government passed its Bill first and began to look into the question afterwards—Mr. Lloyd George taking a special trip to Germany for the purpose—with the consequence that in the first year of their being in force, old age pensions cost 8½ millions sterling instead of the five millions sterling which had been estimated. Whether by luck or judgment, however, the British Government has been saved in this matter of State insurance against invalidity and sickness from such a blunder. It has, indeed, happily, been afforded so considerable a time to study the problem that those who are wrestling with it are really beginning to appreciate the fact that the issues at stake are almost of bewildering complexity.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already had to confess that the actuarial difficulties of this problem are greater than he had anticipated, but

these mathematical conundrums are not the only ones calling for solution before the way for the Bill is made plain. There is, for instance, the conciliation to be undertaken and the support to be won of the great British Friendly Societies—numerically, strong, financially, wealthy, and politically, so far as this government measure is now concerned, suspicious.

From the time when this matter of State insurance against sickness and invalidity was first broached in England, the Friendly Societies have taken up the attitude which in virtue of their activities, position and accumulated wealth, they were legitimately entitled to take, viz.: that no scheme of this kind should be pushed through Parliament without their being consulted. So effective was their attitude in regard to this indeed, that only last year Ministers of the Crown were anxiously declaring to them that the interests of the Friendly Societies would be carefully safeguarded in any scheme of State insurance, and subsequently there were long consultations between Mr. Lloyd George and the representatives of the Friendly Societies, only ceasing at a time when further progress could not well be made until actuarial investigations had taken place—and then with the promise that before any scheme was laid before Parliament the various Friendly Societies should have an opportunity of considering the details.

Somehow or other up to the present Mr. Lloyd George has not made enough headway with his problem to take the Friendly Societies again into his confidence, and with the long wait the Friendly Societies are getting restless. Moreover, they have just heard it officially declared that if the Government carry out their intention of developing a system of State insurance, hand in hand with the Friendly Societies, it will only apply to those institutions which are "approved." That word "approved" to the Friendly Societies seems rather ominous.

The result of it all is that the members of the Friendly Societies' conference are being petitioned not to give the stamp of approval to any government scheme, which does not preserve the individuality of present day organizations. That stipulation, in the opinion of leading Friendly Society men, is almost enough to stifle any government proposal at its inception.

When Mr. Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Winston Churchill, president of the Board of Trade, gaily set out on the solution of this problem, it was thought that a short Act making it compulsory for employee, employer and the State to contribute an equal sum towards State insurance would do it. That is still the basis of the proposal, but the process of giving effect to it, while securing the co-operation both of Friendly Societies and of trades unions, bristles with difficulties.



FIRE AT THE premises of the Montreal News Company, 386 and 388 St. James Street, on July 1, gutted the top storey of the building and damaged the stock on two other floors.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND reported yesterday a decrease for the week in gold coin and bullion holdings of £912,100. Proportion of reserve to liabilities is now 46.40 per cent.