

lutions appear like a laughable farce; but when we know that the effect, if not the object, of them all is to deceive the public, they assume a more serious aspect.

As a matter of curiosity, we would like to know what is to become of the surplus of any assessment, if it should happen to exceed the maximum benefit of the certificates. This is quite a possible contingency, while the membership is large and before the exodus begins. Is it to go into the pockets of Major John Hopper? So far as we can see, there is no provision made for this possibility.

As a summing up, we would say that the Provident Mutual Association of Canada is a mere ordinary co-operative or assessment society, and by no means one of the best even of them. It has the inherent weakness of all these associations, and, like the others, it is bound to fail. Its final collapse may be much closer than is generally supposed.

THE STANDARD FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY OF HAMILTON ONT.

We notice that this Company has secured a column of editorial notice with one of our contemporaries across the line, in which appears that celebrated bundle of figures, highly manipulated, called the Company's 1882 Statement, in all of its pretence and absurdity. It must have been a source of considerable amusement to our American cousins in the City of New York, the underwriters more especially—where their insurance department recognizes nothing, either as capital or assets, except the ready-money or its cash equivalent, to see an hitherto unknown Company of another country spreading itself like a peacock and flaunting as assets an *authorized* capital of \$3,000,000, of which \$297,000 or less than ten per cent, *had actually been subscribed* by some venturesome individuals, including *Secretary Crawford* for himself and "in trust," but who had not the courage of their convictions to back up their names beyond \$19,309 altogether, or about 6½ per cent, of their subscriptions, and claimed total assets of \$88,325, against *boldly admitted* liabilities of \$64,858, among which stands out as conspicuous as ever that memorable \$23,771 "*Kite*," which seems, as yet, to have lost nothing of its tail, and the minimum sum of \$6,676 for *unpaid* losses (wonder if this includes the unpaid loss of Mr. Edson Fitch, of Quebec)—the whole winding up with the magnificent flourish of "*Excess of Assets* \$316,475.72," "*Excess of Assets*" is good, very good, and one would suppose that with such an over-burden of assets the vigilant secretary would make use of some of that excess," haul down that "*Kite*," and pay those unpaid losses.

After enlightening the New York public in the matters of "Authorized Capital," and "Excess of Assets," which, if they took the trouble to read it, must have "tickled them mightily," as a Yankee would say, our urbane contemporary speaks of the Standard's acknowledged contravention of a well-established law of the Dominion, in transacting an underground business without authority, outside of its own Province, quoting Mr. Secretary Crawford's preference for the opinion of legal gentlemen as to the constitutionality of, before submitting to the requirements of a hitherto undisputed law. The notice quoted the very non-committal

opinion of the Hon. Oliver Mowat, Attorney-General for Ontario, and closes by a well-deserved laudation of that gentleman, but fails entirely, despite the glowing figures of "Authorized" and "Subscribed" Capital, and burdensome "Excess of Assets," to say anything—because it knew nothing—of the Standard beyond the questionable opinion that these gaudy figures "shewed a very flattering progress for the New Year," which, perhaps, and under the circumstances, is worth all that the notice cost the Company, so that Mr. Secretary Crawford ought to be satisfied, and think his money, well spent. But we think that we have heard of parties being "damned by faint praise," and the Standard's case in the present instance, seems to us just such an one.

DISCOUNTS FOR FIRE APPLIANCES.

Referring to an article in a recent number of the *English Review* entitled: "The Present Position of Fire Insurance," we find the principle of allowing reduction in rates for fire-extinguishing appliances condemned, for the reason that such appliances are of no practical advantage when wanted.

We take an entirely different view, maintaining that protection appliances are of utility in case of fire, and consequently that the insured is entitled to some consideration for providing such protection.

The system of discounts for extinguishing appliances was first inaugurated in Great Britain by the "Mutual Fire Insurance Corporation" of Manchester, some twelve years ago; and although the appliances have sometimes failed to save the property they protected from total destruction yet we believe the "Mutual" could bear witness that there have been a very much greater number of fires which have been quenched in the outset by means of said appliances, and that the Company's total record would amply justify its course regarding the above-named discounts. The tariff offices fought long and hard against what they declared to be a ridiculous and dangerous precedent, but finding they were losing their hold upon the cream of the cotton and woollen mill risks, and being left with the skim milk of that business, they finally gave way and adopted the identical discounts in use by the "Mutual." The argument that they did this merely in self-defence can hardly be sustained, as we must presume the offices were wise enough in their generation to know that the business they found slipping through their fingers was worth retaining, even with the discounts, otherwise they would have stood by for what they asserted to be "an evil to work its own cure."

Turning to this side of the Atlantic, we ask the *Review* whether any sane man would endeavor to persuade a fire underwriter that what is known as a standard cotton or woollen mill (being furnished with every appliance for extinguishing fire) is no better than an ordinary mill? Experience goes to prove exactly the contrary, and that there are many insipient fires in the said so-called standard mills which but for the appliances would cause serious damage, if not total destruction.

We therefore think that the *Review* is in error when it makes the sweeping assertion it does regarding the uselessness of fire appliances, and, this being so, the common