

The companies asking for amendments to their charters are the Montreal, Portland & Boston, which wants to change its name and consolidate its bonds; an extension of its powers is asked for the Ontario & Pacific Junction Railway; and the Welland wants to convert its first and second mortgage six per cent debenture bonds into first and second five per cent debenture stock, in such form and manner as may be found most desirable. The Ottawa, Vaudreuil & Montreal seek power to construct a branch from some point in the County of Prescott to one on the River St. Lawrence at or near Coteau Landing, and want the name changed to The Coteau and Province Line Railway and Bridge Company, with power to amalgamate with any other company. The private shareholders of the Northern ask power to enable them to elect from amongst themselves three directors, in the place of one as now provided by section twelve of the said Act, and for other purposes. Authority is desired to amalgamate the Montreal & City of Ottawa Junction with other railways, and the Kingston & Pembroke asks power to construct a branch line to Carleton Place, and to issue preferential bonds. The Montreal & Champlain Junction, after making an agreement with the Grand Trunk to take up the existing track between the point of junction of their line formerly known as the Montreal and Champlain Railway, now owned by the G. T. R. Co., and Caughnawaga, and to authorize that company owning said piece of line to abandon that portion of it to relieve them from the maintenance of a ferry at Caughnawaga, and for other purposes.

There are evidently those who think that there is still room for more insurance companies in Canada. Incorporation is sought by the British America Life and the "Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire, Guaranteed." The former would create confusion by its title, and the latter should be compelled to change its name because, of its similarity to a successful company in Ontario. Two companies wish their names changed: the Union to the "Crown," and the Ottawa Agricultural to the Metropolitan, with power to reduce its capital and the value of its shares one-half, and shareholders' liability to the amount unpaid on shares at their reduced value. This Company wishes to do a general fire insurance business, and to amalgamate with other fire companies. The Isolated Risk and Farmers' also apply for power to do a general fire and marine insurance business. The Quebec Fire wishes its capital stock reduced. The Canadian Cattle Insurance Transportation and Express

Company wants incorporation, for the purpose of insuring cattle in transitu, transporting and expressing cattle. The Confederation Life wishes to have its act amended and authority given to invest in the security of its own policies, also to invest in securities in Great Britain and in the United States, and to make legal and effectual discharges or releases throughout the Dominion. The Canada Life proposals are elsewhere noted.

The changes required by our financial institutions are unimportant; the principal being the request of the Home Loan, which asks for authority to receive all the assets, securities, properties and good-will of the Toronto Savings Bank and to assume its liabilities, also to give annually for five years to the trustees of the bank one thousand dollars of fully paid-up stock. In July, 1882, the company is to further give in paid-up stock to the trustees, an amount equal to the net surplus which the company shall have realized from the bank's assets after payment of its liabilities. La Societe Permanente de Construction du District d'Iberville, looks for power to carry on business, with a subscribed and paid-up capital of fifty thousand dollars, and to invest as heretofore its surplus capital. An increase in the borrowing powers and a limitation of the liabilities of shareholders is sought for by the Farmers' Loan Company; while the Ottawa wants to change its name and chief place of business. La Banque Jacques Cartier aims to reduce its capital to not less than \$500,000, and to change the time at which the annual general meetings of shareholders shall be held; and the Consolidated Bank wishes to make some changes in its directorate.

Several Bridge companies are seeking incorporation, and the International Bridge Co. wishes to increase its capital to \$3,000,000. Power is desired by the Dominion Telegraph Company to lease its lines and to make some changes in the mode of conducting its business, while, strange to say, the Direct Cable Company seeks to have its letters patent revoked, and to place its affairs on some other basis.

The other notices that appear in the *Gazette* possess little or no interest for the public.

CLASS FIRE INSURANCE.

Two of our Fire Insurance Companies have lately been applying for a change in their charter for the purpose of enabling them to do a more general business. Both of these companies had been started with the object of insuring only isolated farm property and dwellings, the percentage of

losses on which, it was argued, was so small, that an office confining itself to writing that class exclusively, avoiding more hazardous risks, must necessarily earn handsome profits on its business. The answer, in brief, to this argument is to be found in the record of the two companies alluded to, and in the above application.

Class Fire Insurance has been experimented in at various times on both sides of the Atlantic, and the result has almost invariably been either disappointing or disastrous. It may be safely affirmed that as a class of risks, that of household property in Great Britain is the least hazardous of any, and is one which all offices look upon as most desirable to have upon their books. Yet a company organized in London, England, called the "Household Fire," insuring—as its name indicated—that kind of property solely, lasted but about two years, and was then wound up either voluntarily or in chancery, we forget which, because of its utter inability to pay its way.

The causes of this contradiction to what is apparently a sound principle are not far to seek, and may be roughly set down as follows: First, the high ratio of expenses necessarily attendant upon a class of insurance, the premium income derived from which is small, for of course our readers will readily understand that there are expenses such as rent, taxes, and salaries, which, to a certain extent, are the same whether the income be \$50,000 or \$100,000 per annum, and the percentage is consequently greater upon the former than the latter amount, leaving a less margin applicable to losses. Again, we venture to say that the outside working expenses, so to speak, are heavier from the greater trouble entailed in an office limiting itself to a non-hazardous class of risks than in one doing general business; for large property owners are not in the habit of giving one set of hazards to one company and another set to another. On the contrary, to a company willing to write the hazardous risks they generally give the non-hazardous. Indeed, very often this is made a *sine qua non* by the insuring office, and consequently the class insuring company finds a considerable portion of the very risks it is desirous of writing inaccessible; and it is forced to go far from home to collect very small premiums. Secondly, although the percentage of losses on dwelling property may be light in the aggregate compared to those on more hazardous risks, yet this is more than counterbalanced by the proportionately heavy expenses, together with the inability just pointed out, of the company to obtain sufficient even of the class it lays itself out to insure. For, where the premium of a