

### THE CANADIAN PEOPLE AS REAL ESTATE OWNERS.

The disposition of Crown Lands.—A suggestion for the Montreal Board of Trade.

The people of Canada are the largest real estate owners in the world. Apart from the properties privately owned, the real estate which the Crown holds in trust for the whole people of Canada collectively is of enormous value. Every man, woman, and child must be entitled on a fair distribution to some hundreds of acres of land; which land has a substantial and tangible value to-day. This value is constantly increasing; the world's supply of land and timber is limited; and Canada has more good land and good timber to sell than any other country in the world. We do not mention minerals in the same connection, because the rest of the world apparently has not so nearly exhausted its supply of minerals as it has its supply of land and timber. The problem for the various governments of Canada, federal and provincial, now is how to realize these assets for the greatest advantage of the people of Canada. The most likely way to obtain a satisfactory solution would appear to be, by the application of ordinary business principles to the business under consideration. All our governments might, we are convinced, increase their revenues from crown lands, and promote the settlement and development of the country at the same time. A good deal has been done through railway companies, land companies, colonization companies, and by government immigration agencies of various kinds to promote the sale of crown lands; but is it not possible to do a great deal more? For instance, if the crown lands of the Province of Quebec belonged to a private individual, would he be likely to open his only office for the sale of these lands in the city of Quebec? The Department of Crown Lands of the Province of Quebec ought to have an office in Montreal at which the latest maps, and the fullest possible information could be obtained. Especially while the Canadian mining boom is on ought the Province to open an office in Montreal. We do not see why it would not pay all the provinces, and the Dominion as well, to have some agency in Montreal for the sale of crown lands, etc. At present there is too much disposition "to attempt to do business up a back street." Then would it not be a good plan to give the people of Canada a chance to participate in the work and profit of realizing the national assets? True, they now have certain opportunities of acquiring crown lands; but subject to conditions of settlement which forbid all but a very small percentage taking advantage of them. Why not allow our people to buy at reasonable prices crown lands, in large or small blocks for investment; subject to no conditions of settlement, but subject to such taxation as would prevent the lands being withheld from settlement for long periods to the detriment of the public interest? Were some such plan adopted a great many Canadians would become active agents

for the development of the country. We believe it would be a good plan for the Minister of the Interior to call a conference of the commissioners of crown lands for all the provinces, to discuss the whole question, with a view to concerted action. The world-wide interest which has been aroused in Canadian mining offers an opportunity for and seems to call for exceptional action by all our governments, with a view to developing the latent wealth of the Dominion. The fact that it is impossible for a stranger or a native either to obtain any official information in the Canadian metropolis about Canadian public lands or minerals is enough to suggest the need of a new departure. We commend the subject to the consideration of the Council of the Montreal Board of Trade.

### THE SCANDAL OF MODERN LIFE ASSURANCE.

Rebate Evil Should Cease.

(No. 2.)

In September, 1893, at the annual meeting of the National Association of Life Underwriters, held at Cleveland, when nearly all of the then twenty-five local associations were represented, the all-important subject of rebate was a matter of general discussion, and such unity of spirit and purpose was manifested that the resolutions proposed for the suppression of the evil were unanimously adopted. One of these resolutions read as follows:—

"We believe it lies within the power, and becomes the imperative duty of the executive officers of all the life companies to take such speedy and decisive action that will result in the accomplishment of this long-sought and much-needed reform."

Long years have rolled away since these resolutions were submitted, and yet, as stated in the last issue of *THE CHRONICLE*, this scandal of modern life assurance rears its head, like the phoenix, from the ashes of the past and seems to defy the efforts made for its extinction. Yet the pledges of the National Association at Cleveland in 1893, and the attitude of the principal companies since that time, are in strict accord, so far as words go. Surely such strong resolutions are not mere rhetoric. Let us have action on the part of those most interested in the suppression of this gigantic evil, and it will disappear. They can do it. Why then have they failed?

During the discussion of the resolutions herein referred to, President McCurdy, of the Mutual Life, sent the following telegram, which was read to the Convention by a delegate of that company:—

"In addressing the convention, express strongly the condemnation of rebate by the management of this company. The first law, making it a misdemeanour was drawn in this office, and was passed by our own unaided effort. It is now happily on its last legs, thanks mainly to the Mutual Life. We gave it the first blow; let us give it the final one."

The "last legs" of this bird of evil would appear to