

THE BANK OF MONTREAL

The statement of the Bank of Montreal issued in advance of the annual meeting to be held in June next, is one that will be gratifying to the shareholders and to the public generally. The figures show an advance all along the line; higher profits, greater circulation, increased deposits, enlarged discounts, each and all indicating a prosperous state of trade. The net profits for last year were \$1,601,152 against \$1,537,522 in previous year, the percentage on paid up capital being 13.34. This sum added to the balance at credit of profit and loss made a total of \$2,365,856. Out of this \$1,200,000 was paid in two dividends of 5 per cent. each, and \$1,000,000 was transferred to Reserve Fund by which it was raised to \$8,000,000. Those appropriations left a balance of \$164,856 to credit of profit and loss to be carried forward to next year. More extended review of the statement is reserved until after the annual meeting, at which, no doubt, there will be congratulations exchanged upon a statement that is alike honourable to the premier bank of Canada, to the management and to the Dominion.

BRITISH EMPIRE MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The 55th annual report of the above Company, which will be found complete on a later page, shows the past year to have had satisfactory results. The policies issued were 1,014 in number, amounting to \$2,898,745, besides which 21 immediate or reversionary annuities for \$8,865 per annum, for which \$68,585 was the consideration. The net premium income for the past year was \$1,364,165, from interest on investments \$562,990 was received, making the total income \$1,927,155. The revenue from interest equalled 3.80 per cent. calculated upon the average funds of the year invested and uninvested. The expenses show a decrease in their ratio to premiums. Although the valuation has been placed on a more stringent basis the Company has been able to declare the usual bonus on for all home and Indian policies. Canadian policyholders have, however, not been so fortunate. This has arisen from the fall in the rate of interest in the Dominion below the rate upon which the premiums were fixed for Canada and to the fact that the Canadian business which heretofore was on a 3½ per cent. basis has now been placed on the same level as the Home business, that is 3 per cent. Owing to the anticipation of higher rates for investments being realized in this country the premiums were made low in proportion, but now that money is cheaper in the Dominion the margin of profit is so reduced as to leave insufficient for a bonus. The

policyholders in Canada paid less for their insurance than those in England, so that they have had, practically, a bonus each year by their premiums being below the rate in the old country. The directors offer the Canadian participating policyholders the option of increasing their premiums to the level of the English rate and receiving at future divisions of profits the same bonus as may be declared on English policies, as an alternative to remaining in the Canadian section with participation in the profits of that section.

The British Empire is reported to be in a stronger and more prosperous condition than ever before, its interests in Canada being carefully watched over by Mr. A. McDougald.

BRITISH LIFE ASSURANCE RETURNS.

The annual returns of the British life assurance companies have just been issued by the Board of Trade. They cover the year 1900, with a few exceptions for a portion of 1901. The main reason why these annual returns are so delayed is the Life Assurance Act of Great Britain, which allows the companies nine months after the close of their year within which to file their statements with the Board of Trade. This is an entirely needless delay. In this country the Insurance Department publishes the returns in three months after the close of the year and we have already received bound volumes of reports for 1901 issued by the Insurance Commissioners of several American States, which contain far more elaborate statistical matter than the official returns of the Board of Trade. Even allowing for this nine months' interval, the British returns are inexcusably belated. All the statements for 1900 would be in hand at the close of September, 1901, yet the Board of Trade did not publish them until near the end of April, 1902, later than the annual official reports of Canadian and American companies up to the close of 1901! Our British contemporaries should, as the Prince of Wales said, "wake up" the Board of Trade and secure an amendment to the Life Assurance Act, requiring the companies to file their statements within two months after the close of the year.

The following tables compiled from the Board of Trade Report give a synopsis of the life business of companies operating in the United Kingdom.

There are indications in many of the statements of the disastrous effects of the war upon the mortality of policyholders. The increase over previous year was \$5,282,000, which is regarded as undoubtedly to no small extent attributable to the losses caused by the conflict in South Africa. The changed character of the investments of British life companies is noticeable. They now constitute 27.37