

us between heaven and earth,—this condition is worse than actual loss."

The problem of an inconvertible currency,—based on the credit of the government,—exacting the most extraordinary rates of taxation, levied in the most unpopular manner is being worked out in a manner and on a scale that ten years ago would have seemed chimerical, but the end is not yet apparent, and great interest may attach to the future development of its solution.

THE RETALIATORY POLICY.

If one is to judge by the popular sentiment there is not much growth in the feeling for reciprocity. The protectionists, of course, do not favor it, the interests of farmers must be "protected," is the plausible cry, and there really seems little hope of any broader or better view prevailing. It is astonishing what ignorance prevails on the subject. Hardly a business man outside the farm and lumber trade can be got to tell you what "reciprocity with Canada" means, and even when it is explained they don't care a rush one way or the other. There are so many interests of a character so different, so much business in the country itself; it is so little dependent on Canada, except for one or two articles that the subject is one of indifference. But the retaliatory policy which it is indicated from Ottawa the Canadian Government are about to adopt, will it is certain attract discussion and perhaps be productive of good. It is not by any means clear that the imposition of duties by Canada, on importations from the States will affect interests rude enough or influential enough to provoke a change; but the refusal to license American fishermen within Canadian waters, and the presence of an armed force to prevent them encroaching on Canadian territory, will cause a flutter that the lobbies in Washington cannot prevent having some effect.

It is not to be dreamed that the American eagle will take kindly this of sort thing; he must, of course, soar to the usual heights, and find his "home in the setting sun" a sufficient number of times to satisfy the public conscience; but, in the meantime, the public will be enquiring what it is all about, and if it awakes from its apathy on the subject of reciprocity, and gets roused, to a discussion of the subject, some good will result. The dispute which is pretty sure to result from the different interpretations put upon the Fishery Treaties by the two governments, would be very readily taken as an excuse by some for wreaking vengeance on Canada, to spite England, for her fancied sympathy for the South during the war; but the sensible and influential classes will not fail to discuss with moderation the merits of the case; and, for the future, a national, firm, and dignified policy, is the wisest Canada can adopt.

FREAKS IN LIFE INSURANCE.

We think there is almost classical authority for saying that the Americans as a people are fond of a joke; certainly we have seen a good many who could both perpetrate and enjoy one. Still some of their jokes are very singular, sometimes very practical. It is natural that some Life Insurance Companies and Life Agents hailing from that quarter should also be infected with the prevailing weakness.

Some time since, one company got off the following: An agent was appointed in a certain city at \$1,500 a year, provided with a horse, and equipped generally. Said agent's operations during his term of service are said to have been:—Two life policies, \$4,000; death claims, \$2,000; salary, &c., \$2,000. The same company is, we are told, about to perpetrate another similar joke.

A second company employed one of the windiest, wildest, and most worthless Canadians that Canada can produce, as its general agent. Result: forged policies, debts and obligations spread all over the country, the company in a muss, and the agent on his way to the Penitentiary. But such was this company's little joke.

A third company also produces a joke. An agent has been appointed in one of our largest cities, who is both agent and medical examiner. There are often complaints made of collusion between medical examiners and agents; but that is not possible in this case. This nice arrangement seems to be highly appreciated; the medico-agent certainly appreciates it. If he passes the applicant, he gets the premium; if not—not. But we believe he usually gets the premium. He extends the blessings of life insurance to all and sundry; he is no "respector of persons." So it is said; and such is reported to be this company's method of joking.

We give the above merely as samples of the native mirth exhibited by American life men on this side the lakes, who, be it said, however much they joke, honorably foot their bills, and give us no cause to find fault.

TRADE AND TARIFFS.

Recent debates in Parliament, and various meetings which have been held, indicate unmistakably that public attention is strongly directed to the consideration of our trade relations with other countries, especially with the United States; and that there is a widespread impression that our commercial policy should be revised.

A tariff is simply one mode of assessing taxes. It is a burden on the industry and property of the people who pay it. In the year 1868-9, over eight and a quarter millions of dollars

were paid as duties on goods imported into Canada. The bulk of this sum was as certainly paid by the consumers of the Dominion, as if a poll-tax were levied, though not in the same direct manner. In the one case, the retail dealer becomes unwittingly the "publican"; the tax is paid and received, without even the consciousness of the act, on the part either of payer or collector; in the other, the amount is extracted from unwilling hands at so much per head, on pain of distress and sale of goods and chattels.

While the primary object of a tariff is the maintenance of government, or what is the same thing, the maintenance of a revenue—the assessment and collection of taxes—there is an ample field for the exercise of a wise statesmanship in adjusting that tariff, so as to afford incidental advantages of the greatest importance.

In levying duties, one of the first principles to be observed is, that those articles known as luxuries should be first levied upon, so that the rich and not the poor shall bear the burden. Another principle is, that in a manufacturing country raw materials should be admitted free, and duties levied on the manufactured article. This principle is recognized in our tariff, as it is in all others that we know of. Wool, cotton, hides, hair, broom-corn, &c., are admitted into Canada free, but the manufactures of these materials pay fifteen per cent.

We think that the time has come when the Dominion tariff should be readjusted, with special reference to an extension of this principle. A large number of articles (including all those manufactured to a considerable extent in Canada) now admitted at fifteen per cent. should be transferred to the twenty per cent. list. We urge this for two chief reasons:

1. The country needs the increased revenue.
2. The change would incidentally tend to the encouragement of home enterprise.

It is also desirable to get rid of the excise duty, of five cents on petroleum, which will cost the revenue some \$150,000; but this can only be done by shifting it to some other article.

Our manufacturers contend that their works were established under the tariff of 1859, which imposed a duty of 20 to 25 per cent. on the various classes of goods which they produce. They claim that the reduction made in 1864, has been almost fatal to their prosperity. The linen interest—which embraced several fine establishments, and which received an impetus under the protection afforded by the old tariff—has completely died out. Cotton manufacturers were doing well until the reduction in the duty, since which they have maintained a merely languishing existence. The largest one of them