

are maintained in comfort by the returns received from their judicious savings of early years in the way of premiums under life or endowment policies. It would not be difficult to bring home to you by homely illustration the incalculable value of the system of life insurance, and, if I do not take up your time in pursuing this line of thought and illustration, it is only because I am firmly convinced there is not the slightest necessity therefor. We know the value, we believe in the system, it is an acknowledged universal want adequately met, and it is not, therefore, to be wondered at that in Canada alone at the close of last year the enormous sum of \$543,808,346 was actually in force with the various Life Companies, every dollar of which was under absolute protection and ready to be paid when the time of the maturity of the claims shall come.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his early days, ere he had obtained his Medical Degree and ere his reputation as a prose writer had been established, was given to writing pastoral poetry, much of which has been forgotten and much of which deserves to be buried in the dim and distant past. In one of these pastoral pieces whilst addressing a festival in the Berkshire Hills says :

"Take a whiff from our fields and your excellent wives,
"Will declare its all nonsense insuring your lives."

With fields as goodly as any the Divine Creator ever planted in the loveliest and most fertile of countries, Canada's answer to the poet's scornful utterance is life insurance in force to the extent of over five hundred million dollars, and I mistake the temper of the Canadian women if they would voluntarily surrender a dollar of their heritage.

I would not have you think that in the two abstract questions I have propounded I have exhausted the proof of the greatness of our business interests. I have but touched upon its greatness in the light of the protection afforded, and yet ere I pass from this phase of the question pause a moment and take in the enormity of the interests thus dealt with :—

The total amount of insurance in force in Canada at December 31st, 1900, as returned to the Dominion Government is as follows :—