

furnish many a shipload annually of the finest lumber and spars for transportation to all parts of the globe, to places indeed as widely apart as Hong Kong and Marseilles or as Singapore and Rio de Janeiro.

The local development that must arise from the opening of the railway by the building up of interprovincial trade is a feature that must not be lost sight of. Mr. Van Horne, in his recent report, declares that "every part of the line, from Montreal to the Pacific coast, will pay." Why? Because he has come to appreciate the fact that the different parts of the Dominion possess varied and distinct natural resources, which will enable them to interchange products and manufactures to mutual advantage. He has personally satisfied himself, he says, that the forests which the line penetrates after crossing the Rocky Mountains "alone will furnish large and remunerative traffic for the railway." He tells of trees which are eight and nine feet in diameter, measured seven feet above the ground, and pronounces the supply of this raw material to be "practically inexhaustible." He says "there are many other sources of traffic and wealth, the chief among them being the coals and the fisheries. The richness of the fisheries is almost beyond belief."

The resources thus very briefly enumerated, being just the very kind of which so large a portion of the North-West Territories is conspicuously deficient, will find a home market by means of the railway. Regina, Brandon, and even Winnipeg may before long draw their chief supplies of lumber and coal from the Pacific Slope, while fresh salmon and other fish from the Fraser River and the Gulf of Georgia, together with such fruits as cannot be grown to advantage in the prairie region, will in a few years be articles of common consumption in the Territories and Manitoba. In return, the prairie farmer will be able to furnish the hardy miner, the industrious lumberman, and the skilful fruit grower of British Columbia with the "staff of life" in highest perfection, together with pork, beef, hides, and wool. Interprovincial intercourse will thus become highly advantageous and should do much, not only to stimulate the development of the latent resources that Canada possesses in such great variety, but to increase the home and foreign trade of her merchants.

LIFE INSURANCE CHART.

In to-day's issue we present one of the most valuable compilations respecting the business of life insurance in Canada, which has ever appeared—always excepting the Blue Book itself. As respects fourteen of the best known companies, the growth of the premium income, of the new business, of the total amount in force, of the death claims, &c., for six years past, can be seen at a single glance. Other life companies transact considerable business in the Dominion, but were not doing anything to speak of six years ago, or have commenced business here recently, such as the North American, Federal, British Empire, United States and New York. Five other companies, which do both fire and life insurance business, issued only the small number of thirty-three life policies

all told in 1883, the North British getting the lion's share, and the other twenty being divided between the L. L. and Globe, the Commercial Union, the Queen and the Royal.

During the past year the Toronto Life, of which Arthur Harvey, late of the Provincial Fire, was secretary and manager, has thrown up the sponge, and the Life Association of Hamilton, formerly the Mutual Life, has ceased to do business. Both companies were organized in this city in the year 1873, the one the one on the stock basis and the other on the mutual system, and for some years both gave good promise of success. The Mutual removed to Hamilton early in its career, its principal backers residing there, and made a brave struggle, but was weighted down by heavy expenses and death losses, and its mutual policy holders were therefore never able to realize a single dividend. Latterly it changed its name and obtained additional capital, but without any material improvement, and for the present has decided to cut off the expense of seeking new business. For particulars as to its recent history we refer those interested to the chart opposite "Life Association of Canada." The operations of the Toronto Life not having been deemed of sufficient importance to appear in chart form, hitherto, we now summarize them from the blue book:—

Year.	Prem's.	New Ins.	Total Ins.	Claims Paid
1874	\$ 8,978	\$132,500	\$283,800
1875	9,871	120,531	318,531	\$3,000
1876	10,882	135,729	343,881	3,500
1877	6,120	52,000	275,551	2,000
1878	6,435	49,138	209,490
1879	4,674	17,616	163,609
1880	4,730	69,716	193,747	1,930
1881	6,262	76,800	220,909	2,200
1882	5,252	35,500	171,309	1,100
1883	2,434	4,150

The record of the Toronto winds up in the blue book with "Policies transferred to the Federal Life Assurance Co., 169, insuring \$171,308." The Federal is a new company, started in Hamilton two years ago, with an authorized capital of \$1,000,000, of which \$63,327 had been paid up in cash at last accounts, and a small amount more in promissory notes. It issued in 1883 some 333 new policies, insuring \$410,383, and its total insurance in force is \$722,699. The total new insurance issued by all the companies in Canada, during the past year, foots up to \$21,572,960 showing a fair increase of one and a half millions over 1882, and the amount remaining in force at the close of the year was \$124,196,875, against \$113,613,475 at the close of the previous year. The death claims paid were \$1,593,029. This is an increase over the previous year of \$333,508. The deaths cost the Canadian companies, most of whose business is under ten years old, only \$10.10 per \$1,000; the British companies \$19.40 and the American companies \$14.50. The general average was \$13.40. The previous year it was only \$11.70.

—The *Canadian Gazette*, of London, England, is unable to say how much truth there is in the rumor that "the British post-office will be asked to use the Canadian Pacific Railway as an alternative route to the Peninsular and Oriental steamship service for the mails to China and Japan." Greater shortness, in point of time, is claimed for

the Canadian route, and if this be beyond doubt, the change ought to be probable. Some of those who are bound to find some employment for Sir John Macdonald, in England, attribute to him an intention to bring the subject before the British government.

—In England the coincidence of diminishing stocks of goods, with few exceptions, with lessened price is a phenomenon not to be overlooked. It would ordinarily indicate that a turn in the tide is about to come. Why declining price in connection with decreased supplies should indicate a state of things immediately precedent to recovery, the *N. Y. Bulletin* shows: "There are manifest reasons why this should be so; for (1) the reverses attending such a course of trade are apt to weed out the weak elements; and (2) low prices are calculated to encourage consumption; and (3) low stocks make room for new supplies; and (4) the demand for banking accommodation being greatly reduced, the money market becomes extremely easy (the Bank of England rate being now only 2 per cent.) and merchants are encouraged to operate for a future upward turn in values. For these reasons, the present condition of prices and of stocks in Great Britain may be viewed as warranting the hope that the world-wide reaction which has now been in operation for at least two years is about reaching its culmination. This inference could be more depended upon were it not for the present unsettled condition of European politics, which, far more than anything in the intrinsic condition of trade, tends to check confidence and restrict business. What the above facts show as to the condition of affairs at the chief centre of the world's markets may be inferred, in the main, as to the position of business in the United States also. Both here and in Europe the politician is now the great obstacle to the recovery of confidence and the return of good times."

—A correspondent desires to be enlightened as to the Metric system of weights and measures. It is a system of French origin, we believe, at any rate it received legal sanction in France in 1801. The unit of length in the system is the measure called the *metre*, which is equal to 39.37 inches English. The *decimetre* is one-tenth part of the *metre*, and the *centimetre* is one hundredth. The *kilometre*, again, which one constantly hears of in connection with French voyages, or it may be wars, consists of a thousand metres, or say, 3,280 English feet. The units of weight, liquid and land measure adopted in France, such as the *gramme*, the *litre*, the *are*, are derived from the *metre* or proceed from the same basis, hence *kilogramme*, $2\frac{1}{2}$ English pounds, nearly, *centigramme*, &c. It will be observed that the system is a decimal one, so that in their measures, as in their coinage, the French nation has long enjoyed the facility of the decimal system. It appears strange that the English stick so long and so stubbornly to *£. S. D.* It has been wondered at by some of her own scientists, Sir William Thomson and Mr. William Preece, for example, that even her Scientific Congresses refuse to give in, and form an international