

the waterway of Georgian Bay, the Mattawa, the Ottawa, and the St. Lawrence.

Having abolished the tariff, Mr. Hill would complete the Georgian Bay Canal, and so make for Chicago an egress to salt water compared with which the Buffalo route would become a superfluity. As became an address to a company of Chicagoans Mr. Hill's deliverance touched nothing that it did not dollarize. The commercial note was bound to be dominant; but it need not have been quite so hardily struck. He seemed to think that in the temporary failure of Mr. Chamberlain's preferential policy in Britain, Canada would readily find an excuse for a commercial merger with the United States.

There is a certain attractiveness about the suggestion that, inasmuch as the United States tariff against us is higher than ours against it, the lowering of that rampart of imposts would mean better business all round. But the situation cannot be dealt with in the same fashion as a dispute about freight rates. Nor is it such a child of expediency that the future will be determined by the accident of a general election in England. Back of Mr. Hill's sane talk about the immediate expansion of Canada is the notion that the whole thing may become a perquisite of United States enterprise. The fates are against such a reading of the signs of the times.

As the tree is bent, so will it grow. So far as human toil can predestinate, the place of Canada in the march of progress was finally marked out when the highway along the North Shore was laid down. The tariff was one of the implements deliberately chosen by the builders of the Dominion and the Republic. It has produced commercial habits that will not be shaken off. The alien will be an alien still, even though he be flesh of our flesh.

Let two aspects of Mr. Hill's proposal keep large space in mind—first, the realization by that truly great mind of the necessity for transporting Canadian products over Canadian soil; and, second, the feasibility of the Georgian Bay Canal. The spidery invasion of the Canadian West by the Great Northern may, after all, provoke a first-class political and economical controversy more rapidly than most of us suppose. It is intended to carry as much wheat as possible out of Canada by way of a United States road. Mr. Hill will not be happy to let all his cars return empty to Canadian towns. They will be expected to bring American produce and manufactures. No wonder the abolition of the tariff is important. There is nothing to fear in the Americanization of the West, so long as there is ample publicity for all its works; and so long as eminent people do not dwell in Fools' Paradises. But there is abundant need to discover the true tendency of the smoothest speaking. In some quarters, beloved of Government, the Hill propaganda has been thankfully received. So far it has great claim to be closely scrutinized.

As for the Georgian Bay Canal, it is a favorite thinking-stand for Mr. Hill. It is not yet within the range of practical politics. There is no mighty man of works in the public service. But there will be, one of these days. When he arrives he will prove to be a home-staying Jim Hill. He will be an asset of the first magnitude. And the Georgian Bay Canal will come to pass.

GREATER FREEDOM, BUT—

The conference held this week at Ottawa between delegates of the Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association and the Insurance Commission was friendly enough, and the recommendations made to the Commission were in the best interests of life assurance.

No unreasonable privileges were asked for. It is desired that the investment powers of all life companies be made uniform, and the leaving of certain

kinds of industrial companies out of the permissible list is suggested. The companies asked to be allowed to invest (1) in such bonds as are secured by mortgages to trustees or a trust corporation; (2) in debentures of a corporation already in business for three years; and (3) in the shares of any company which has paid dividend for three years before their purchase; always provided that no life company shall invest in its own shares or those of another life company. All the other suggestions made under this heading are evidently intended to improve the conduct of the life business, and to require greater publicity for the operations of the companies.

As to estimates of policy earnings, which have often been excessive and misleading; it is proposed that these shall be printed in the Insurance Blue Book in order that they may be from time to time compared with actual results. It is proposed also that profits paid to policyholders at last division of surplus on the principal plans of assurance be published each year.

Another suggestion made is that the accounts of companies, before being sent to the Government, shall be submitted to the boards of directors; and that the more technical aspects of them be vouched for by an actuary of recognized standing as well as by two auditors, one of whom must be a chartered accountant.

In view of some revelations made at previous sittings of the Commission, it is recommended that legislation be framed to govern the transfer or amalgamation of life companies, such as prevails in Great Britain, where, if a certain proportion of policyholders object to a merger it cannot go through.

Considering the services rendered to the Government, in the framing and administration of the Banking Act, by the Canadian Bankers' Association, (incorporated), the life officers ask that their association be similarly incorporated, believing that such a body can, if consulted, render valuable assistance in the direction of insurance law drafting and administration.

As to the rebating the Life Officers recommend that such laws will be enacted "as will effectually prohibit the granting or the accepting of a rebate of a life assurance premium."

It is idle to speculate as to the complexion of the Commission's report, which is likely to be ready within the next two or three weeks. The Policyholders' Association has been heard from. There is no violent clashing between the views advanced for it; and those embodied in the life managers' memorial. The Commission has elicited quite a catalogue of things that are bad in method; but little that was deadly in principle in the conduct of Canadian insurance. On the whole, the companies have come well out of the ordeal. Insurance will be stronger than before; and there seems no reason to anticipate excessive legislation in any direction. The chief spokesman for the policyholders—himself one of the keenest business men in the country—declared for the largest possible freedom in investment, though he would not concede so much except it were coincident with restrictions which, if they are enforced will compel some managers vitally to readjust their points of view; and principles of management.

Notably is this the case in regard to the extent to which insurance premiums are regarded as essentially trust funds. A little wholesome exhortation in this respect is needful from time to time; for it is easy for an official handling aggregations of premiums as commonplace of his daily round, to lose sight of the jealousy, with which the average father of a family regards the bestowal of the saved money which is intended to be the last defence against the last calamity. It is the duty of friends of insurance companies, like ourselves, to insist, not captiously, but as clearly as the English language will permit, that neither things present nor things to come must be permitted to deflect insurance managers from the most insistent re-

cognition that they are trustees with obligations.

Company promoting is no part of business. It is no answer, when a breach of an Act of Parliament have turned out well for the policy company may fitly promote an election should it not float a Cobalt mine. It has been made out of Cobalt within months by companies (half as successful as Life). Nobody has been crazy enough to make an enterprise. But where, in essence, between putting policyholders' money believe will be a sure mine; and in will be a sure traction? There is a tween electric rails and meta mine a company which finds itself saddled with the ment of an unsuccessful line has to generalizing about the wisdom of motion, and accumulations of bonds.

Let there be a wise liberty in where be the most frequent, most of everything that is done with money. But let there be constant vital difference between an insurance any ordinary monetary institution. Business men who take big chances lives insure their lives because they. They distrust talk about their trust funds "in the narrow sense." sense about these obligations. If the freedom in insurance there must tion of the accountability of trust policyholder is a business man, and

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If it were possible to speak a banker as it was, at one time, to talk we should dwell in doubly interesting. How can there be a new banker with forms of law which hedge him about decades ago? A chartered bank. The promissory note, the overdraft, what they were. Simple addition table, and interest tables are without integrity knows no shadow of turning.

Still people will talk about the same. And, in truth, things are used to be. The law abideth, honorable estate. But, somehow, change in the way in which men "accommodation." Upon the change opinions are wide as the difference is the difference between new. It is the battle in array between servative; and the conservative will innovate. In everything else but been the difference between expanding shrinking prosperity. In banking servatism remains, and will remain have money to lend are never concerned regard of those who have it not. I never have expanded if those who custom always refused to move doesn't grow unless it circulates. banker moves, even when he votes an inch. That class of banker Canada. His few distant relations become inarticulately venerable. of nervous health in the land which likes it to wear well-accustomed

Indeed, it were easier to divide goats than to earmark the old bank. What is happening is merely a revolution and methods to the variations of aged fathers in finance discover to appointing to high positions fellow