

The whole plant of this Company's works are now in the market, at much less than their original cost, and might, by being removed to one of the many rich and softer iron deposits in other parts of this province, be a means of greatly adding to the iron industry of the country, on which greater demands are every day being made owing to the enormous use of iron in almost every article of commerce.

These furnaces with ore equal to that found in the Lake Superior District, containing say 62½ per cent. iron, of which we have large quantities in the Dominion, would easily produce, using coke or charcoal as fuel, 50 tons of iron a day, a result certainly sufficient to guarantee any venture made with them being an undoubted success, *especially* when we keep in view that at present the home supply of iron is far short of the demand, to such a degree even that ore is imported from Canada into the States, smelted there, and exported back to us as manufactured iron.

With sufficient assurance of success, of which the most complete evidence can be afforded, could not some of our larger capitalists be induced to take advantage of these hints, and save from ruin and idleness works which represent a value of £80,000 sterling?

#### SAVINGS BANKS AND LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES.

The *Christian Register* in a recent number comments on the failure of the Freedmen's Savings Bank and the Third Avenue Savings Bank in New York, with the suspected weakness of some life insurance companies in that city and in several parts of the country, says that they are full of suggestions for thoughtful persons, and calls attention to the insufficient safeguards which are often thrown around the property of the poor and confiding, and provoke doubts of the security of some popular institutions.

If any financial trusts should be considered peculiarly sacred they are those which are assumed by the officers of savings banks and life insurance companies. When we think of the rigid economy and self-denial involved in some small deposits, and how indispensable they are to certainty of food and shelter, and comfort in sickness or old age, we sometimes wonder at the obtuseness of receiving-clerks, who scarcely glance at the toil-worn hands and anxious faces before them. To trifle with such property, exposing it to needless risks, if not using it unlawfully in rash speculations or ostentatious outlays, is exceedingly criminal. And it is just as bad

to be careless about life insurances. Especially in these hard times, the payment of premiums is not an easy task. To a large majority of policy-holders it involves much hardship and many privations. Nothing but the desire to make sure provision for the wants of widows and orphans in the event of the deaths of bread-winners could reconcile thousands of men to such severe exactions.

Yet there have been frequent indications of extravagance in the management of these corporations. They sometimes seem to have a superabundance of agents and clerks. They vie with each other in the erection of showy and costly buildings, which may gratify official pride, but can hardly prove remunerative investments. When rich and public-spirited men use their own money in beautifying city streets with tasteful architectural displays, we are moved to praise rather than censure; but we do not like to see grand structures built with trust funds belonging to owners who need all the returns that they can possibly obtain. In their service inexpensive buildings of studious plainness are most appropriate. It is better to receive a good dividend in a shabby room than to take a poor dividend from a marble counter, under a gilded ceiling.

And the responsibility is often so divided as to be in great danger of being destroyed. The boards of management are needlessly large. Some of the best names of directors, those of men of the largest fortunes, whose characters command implicit confidence, have no right to appear in advertisements, for they represent persons who know little or nothing of the affairs of institutions which they apparently profess to oversee and guide. Even vice-presidents sometimes do better than usual if they attend one meeting in a year. Thus millions of dollars are obtained upon virtually false pretenses. So long as all goes well there may be no complaint; but in the event of failure disgrace should be inevitable. Still, who will ever be punished for the misdeeds of the Freedmen's Bank, for those of the Third Avenue or the Mechanics' of Montreal? What redress would policy-holders have if the proudest life insurance company should close its gorgeous doors? No man should allow his name to be published to attract confidence unless he intends to comply, faithfully, with the conditions of trustworthiness. If such institutions are proved guilty of swindling, somebody should be sent to prison. We have had enough examples of the penalties of stealing small sums and the immunity which attends wholesale robberies.

#### BUTLER ON SPECIE RESUMPTION.

The Hon. B. F. Butler delivered, on Friday last, a lecture on Specie Resumption, under the auspices of the New York Board of Trade. Ben is an inflationist, and made some very absurd statements to prove his theory. Some sarcastic Southerners say that his experience of silver resumption in New Orleans during the war has driven him into his present position on the finance question. A New York paper, advertizing to his statement that the Bank of England had suspended specie payments three times since 1844, makes unmerciful exposure of the lecturer's ignorance, and asks: "how General Butler could have fallen into these egregious misstatements of fact, and have made them the basis of one of his most prominent arguments. The explanation is easy enough, but it exposes such a blundering looseness of thought and dense ignorance of the subject that General Butler will blush when he sees the correction. He has frequently read of the 'suspensions' of 1847, 1857 and 1866 in connection with the Bank of England, and in the profundity of his misinformation he supposed it meant suspensions of specie payments, whereas, in fact, the word referred only to the suspension of a particular provision of the Bank act. Specie payments have never suspended for a day since the passage of that act. There has not been a day since 1821 when the notes of the Bank of England were not paid in coin on presentation.

By the act of 1844 the Bank is permitted to issue notes to the amount of fifteen millions on securities, but beyond that sum no note is issued without an equal amount of coin or bullion deposited and kept for its redemption. In a financial crisis, when everybody wants money and fears he cannot get it, the Bank is restrained by this provision from granting any relief to the community, because the issue of more notes would require the deposit of the same amount of gold, and the available money would not be increased by taking precisely as much gold out of circulation as was equal to the new notes put into circulation. In order to relieve financial panics this part of the Bank act has three times been suspended—that is to say, the Bank has been permitted to issue additional notes on securities instead of deposits of equal amounts of gold. It was not suspension of specie payments—which were not interrupted—but suspension of the rule which forbids the issue of notes except on an equal amount of gold. And General Butler is so discreditably ignorant as to confound this with a suspension of specie payments! It is not a mere inadvertence such as a man might fall into in the haste of extemporaneous speaking. For the speech was deliberately written out, put in type and the proofs corrected before it was delivered. General Butler says, "as early as October 23, 1847, three years after the reorganization of the Bank, she suspended specie payments;" and again he says, "November 9, 1867, the Bank of England again suspended specie payments;" and still again he says, "In November, 1866, the Bank of England suspended specie payments." Now, as it is a well known historical fact that the Bank of England did not suspend specie payments on any of these occasions, the public can draw its own infer-