

and American companies in competition for Canadian life business.

"The Review" quotes the following expression of opinion from the manager of one of the large British life companies in Montreal: "British companies do not get more life insurance business because they do not go after it as Canadian and American companies do. British companies are content with an annual increase of about 12½ per cent. British companies that do a life and fire business prefer to push the latter as more profitable. The Canadian Insurance Act prevents outside companies doing two classes of business in Canada. An exception is made of companies that were doing both fire and life insurance prior to the passing of the new act."

The executive head of one of Canada's big life insurance companies also undertook to explain why British companies play such a small part in the life insurance business of Canada. He said: "It is due chiefly to the fact that they do not adopt their methods to suit the Canadian field. They get business at home in a rather desultory way, not having specialized sales forces, as in America, where the agents of the most vigorous companies write insurance and do little else. The consequence is that the British companies have been left far behind. I do not think Canadian or American companies on the whole paid larger profits. Indeed, I know of some British that do better in this respect than these of this continent. The British life companies seem to depend on their reputation to place policies, but this is not working out as it does in the fire business. There seems to be little chance now of the British companies catching up even if they should desire to do so."

THE DEFEAT OF MONEY BY-LAWS

PROPERTY owners' hostility to increased capital charges is echoed by the "Vancouver World's" comments upon the defeat of ten money by-laws, already mentioned in these columns. The "World" says:—

"There is no mistaking the meaning of so comprehensive a verdict. Had one or two of the by-laws passed, it might have been possible to ascribe to the ratepayers a disagreement with the authorities respecting the policy involved in the submission of those that were rejected. As it is, the property-owners have served notice, not for the first time, that until the basis of taxation is broadened, so that some part of the burden of the upkeep of various public utilities is borne by those who derive direct benefit from them, they do not propose to permit it to be increased, so far as they are able to prevent it.

"The returns may indicate even more than that. Time was when the property-owners voted for money by-laws as a matter of course and with as little discrimination in casting their affirmative ballots as they showed when they voted so overwhelmingly in the negative. In those days many owners held their property for speculative purposes, and almost all alike regarded a rise in property values as an unmixed blessing. There was little complaint that valuations for taxation purposes were too high, there was more than one agitation for a general raising of the level as the difference between the assessed and the market value, as settled by actual sales, tended to restrict realty operations. More schools, more paved streets, more improvements generally, seemed to have the effect of attracting population and so raising selling prices. The cry was "progress," and anything that appeared progressive was pretty sure of the sanction of the people who, in the end, would have to pay the bills.

"Since then certain economic discoveries have been made and property-holders have found that a paved street may be more of a liability than an asset to the lot saddled with the frontage tax, and that it depends on the commercial and industrial soundness of the community much more than on its educational and other institutions, whether property pays or not. Having learned this it becomes a question whether a

minority that looks primarily to its own direct interests, may not always be large enough in the future, to deny to the citizens generally improvements in civic services which are imperatively needed, except in so far as these can be provided out of revenue. Should this prove to be the case, it follows that the revision of the scheme of local taxation will also have to involve a revision of the scheme of popular control of capital expenditures.

"That things have come to this pass, that this sharp, and formerly almost negligible, opposition of the interests of those who pay for and those who make use of civic utilities has arisen, is the fault, not of the aldermanic board of Vancouver, but of the government and legislature of British Columbia. Proposal after proposal has been taken down to Victoria session after session, only to be rejected without any workable substitute being suggested. Only last year Premier Oliver asked a large meeting of representative ratepayers to refrain from reprisals, at least until a government commission had examined the situation and found the remedy. Vancouver waited expectantly and was rewarded with powers to impose two unpopular levies that the government feared to impose itself and which, even had the powers been exercised, would have been totally inadequate. This vote is the comment of the ratepayers on the ineptitude displayed at James Bay."

The statement that a maximum price for bituminous coal will be fixed in the United States, does not greatly encourage the Canadian consumer. We have had some experience with price-fixing here.

A report of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics showing the quantities of food in cold storage as at June 1 indicates increases in almost all commodities as compared with last year. This, coupled with the excellent prospects for production in 1920, explains the substantial reductions which are taking place in the prices of food products.

J. J. Morrison, secretary of the United Farmers of Ontario, says that if labor will help reduce the tariff, the farmers will endeavor to bring about the eight-hour day. Such a programme might be successful politically, but as economic measures they are not consistent. The lower tariff would reduce prices and production costs, but shorter hours will increase them.

The Nova Scotia Liberal government was returned to power in the election held on July 27. This is the first Canadian administration to succeed at a general election since the armistice, the war-time governments of Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba all having failed to secure a majority at the polls. The new parties made substantial gains in Nova Scotia, however, labor securing 5 seats and the farmers 7, in place of none before. The Liberals have 30 and the Conservatives 1 seat in the new house, compared with 32 and 11, respectively, in the former legislature.

"The feeling that the summit of high prices has been reached continues to depress certain markets and to exercise a restraining influence on buying," says the July "Review," issued by Barclay's Bank, London, Eng. "Even in the retail trade, there is evidence that purchases are being deferred for lower prices and that an increasing number of buyers are, for the moment, refusing to purchase anything they can do without. On the other hand, sellers are not inclined to cut prices where this step can be avoided, and it results that in many markets quotations are nominal with little new business passing." The bank points out, however, that "it is difficult to see anything in prevailing economic conditions, either at home or abroad, which justifies the assumption that a drastic and permanent fall in general prices is at hand."