

**An American  
Politician.**

As the many Canadians who read our Republican neighbours' newspapers are aware, a Mr. Webster Davis has been peregrinating through the different States endeavouring to inflame the public mind on the subject of British rule in South Africa. He is merely adding to the general ignorance of the true condition of affairs in a country of which he knows next to nothing and cares less. This is how the New York correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian," enlightens his English readers as to the estimation in which this American politician is held by good and thoughtful Gothamites.

"The resignation of Mr. Davis, Assistant Secretary of the Interior on the ground that his sympathy with the Boers compels him to abandon the "pro-English" Administration is regarded here as a piece of delicious humbuggery. The truth is that Mr. Davis is at loggerheads with his chiefs on other questions, and his quitting the public service was only a question of time. Having journeyed to South Africa on leave, he now returns to present ostentatiously and for pseudo-patriotic reasons the resignation which would in any case have been shortly demanded. At the same time his retirement amid anti-British fireworks testifies to the hold which he and other oratorical demagogues like him think hatred of England still has on the masses of this country. Neither he nor any other champion of the Boers is able to say what Mr. McKinley might have done which he has not done; yet their outcries and protests are having some effect in confusing the popular mind. Mr. Davis is really a ridiculous personage, yet his skilfully executed resignation may prove of considerable political embarrassment to Mr. McKinley."

**A Fire Report  
and Its Lessons.**

The yearly report of the Fire Marshal of Manhattan was issued on Monday last, and New York papers are already busily engaged in setting forth the lessons to be learned by underwriters and the general public therefrom. It seems that the fire losses in Manhattan during 1899 were nearly double those of 1898. The fires numbered 5,393 as against 4,239 in the preceding twelve months, and the losses were \$7,458,840 as against \$4,155,191 during the previous year. The Fire Marshal recommends the enforcement of a law prohibiting swinging gas jets, and he also condemns the placing of gas and lamp brackets in proximity to curtains. So much for the duty of the general public, the insured.

To the underwriters, he addresses some words of warning. He says that, as the result of investigations into suspicious fires, he has become convinced that many insurance agents are somewhat lax in respect to the class of risks and the premises insured. He also deplores a tendency to write insurance largely in excess of the value of the property. A leading New York paper says the strictures of the Fire Marshal are quite warranted, and that there is too much laxity in insuring where a suspicion of moral hazard exists. It is also claimed that increasing competition makes it easy for those who are known to have had suspicious fires to again procure insurance.

Even if the same condition of things does not exist in Canada, there is one difficulty referred to which has often to be grappled with by Dominion underwriters—the regulation of the amount of insurance on any given quantity of property. How to regulate this without going to frequent expense for appraisals, and

thereby loading the cost of insurance to an undue extent, is the question asked, but not answered, by one of our contemporaries. We hope our newly-formed Insurance Institute may deal with this and other difficulties of profitable fire underwriting in the near future.

**Re-Organizing the  
Imperial Army.**

The author of Some Suggestions with regard to the Proposed Re-organization of the Imperial Army is evidently a very modest patriot. He does not disclose his name, and he admits that he is not a military man. Yet, he has no occasion to apologize for giving us his thoughts, in pamphlet shape, upon a subject now occupying the public mind to the exclusion of nearly all peaceful matters. The question of the best means of giving a military education to the young men of the British Empire is one likely to push itself into great prominence at the close of the present campaign in South Africa, and the advocates of Imperial Federation are certainly indebted to this Scottish-Canadian for his suggestions.

His scheme will serve a very useful purpose, from whatever point of view we may regard it. The Empire has, of course, shown that large bodies of men and much war material can be moved at the shortest notice to any point of the British possessions. Therefore, the necessity for having transports always in commission is not apparent. But the establishment of military depots in the different parts of the English speaking world to which those desirous of receiving military training to fit them for the defence of the Empire could be sent for instruction, seems to be a capital plan, and one which promises to effectually remove our own militia force outside the radius of politics. Moreover, it would, of necessity, mean first-class rifle ranges and competent instructors in musketry and drill in every district of every country over which the British ensign floats.

**A GOOD PRESIDENT.**—The Mexico of to-day shows little resemblance to the Mexico when Gen. Diaz first became its President. The authority of the Government is maintained, life and property are protected, the Government has met its obligations with scrupulous fidelity under circumstances that would have excused it for seeking to scale down its foreign obligations, and under these favoring conditions business has thriven and manufacturing, merchandising and transportation have expanded wonderfully. A statement just issued in the City of Mexico shows that in fifteen years imports have considerably more than doubled, and exports have increased from under forty million dollars gold value to about \$73,000,000 in gold value, but these exports include the precious metals; the export of merchandise is very much less. The revenue of the Government has increased about two-thirds in silver, but as silver has declined the revenue in gold has probably decreased a little. The number of pieces of mail matter has increased ten-fold, and the railroad and telegraph mileage has much more than doubled. The number of steamers entering Mexican ports has increased four-fold.