chandise. This is what Mr. E. E. Sheppard, the Government commissioner to Mexico, tells us, and it is not pleasant to hear. The Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Nova Scotia ought to do quantities of trade with Mexico, for she is a rapidly growing republic, and both countries want what the other produces.

With the view of testing what we had heard of the remarkable development of Mexico in late years, and also of learning what articles might best constitute the basis of a trade between the two countries, we have arranged for a series of papers from a Canadian, now resident in the capital of that country. The first of these we present to-day. It shows how great the progress of the Mexican Republic has been within a dozen years in the matter of fiscal organization, in railways and telegraphs, in harbors and drainage, in mining and manufactures. It shows, too, how vastly the foreign trade of Mexico has changed its channels. Twenty years ago Europe took 60 per cent. of the exports of Mexico, and supplied 74 per cent. of her imports, while less than a third of the total American trade was done with the United States. To-day, however, as a result of railway communication and Mexican enterprise by rail and water, the United States received last year 79 per cent. of Mexico's exports, and sent more than half her imports.

Taking up the last Ottawa return of Trade and Navigation we find that $37,425 worth of Canadian goods were sent to Mexico in 1897, three-fourths of them lumber, telegraph poles and coal from British Columbia, the remainder including bicycles, sewing machines, etc., from Quebec and Ontario; while our purchases, consisting of coffee and cigars, were under $10,000. And yet we know that hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of Canadian products have been forwarded to Mexico by United States firms as American products, and have gone to swell the $46,261,000 worth of goods bought within the year by the smaller republic from the larger one.

Bearing in mind what was related to us by Mr. Sheppard last year of his reception by President Diaz and the anxiety that functionary expressed to cultivate trade relations with Canada, we are sure of warm treatment by the Mexican Government. But the average Mexican merchant does not know Canada; he does, however, know France, Britain and the United States, who buy from him and sell to him. And he will not know Canada so long as Canadian manufacturers and exporters are willing to send their goods through American houses. Why not ship from Canadian ports and use our own vessels instead of American ports and ships? Surely our Halifax and St. John merchants can trade by vessel with Progresso, Vera Cruz, Tampico, or other Gulf of Mexico ports just as well as New York vessels can. If in the West Indies we can compete, why not in Mexico? And on the Pacific coast British Columbia can do more.

Mr. Sheppard, the trade commissioner, contends that Canada should handle her own trade. Mr. Lindsey, who is on the spot, says that Mexico will take our coal and lumber; our breadstuffs and provisions; our lard and dairy products; our agricultural and mining machinery; besides textile and rubber manufactures, chemicals and drugs, malt liquors, prepared fish. On the other hand we can buy from Mexico sugar and coffee, oranges and other fruits, tobacco leaf, fancy woods, flax, hemp, jute. Is not the experiment worth while? If it is let it be made in a spirited and modern way, recognizing that we have great competitors.

—"'Tis a pleasure to look at a well dressed man. A plain man with a good figure, square shoulders, erect and symmetrical—well drilled and better dressed—is a sight that ever pleases the fair sex."—*Sidney Smith.*

MORE ASSESSMENT KICKING.

The Mutual Reserve Fund half-price assessment concern, of New York, is getting a large amount of advertising of late, of a sort it does not relish. Newspapers all over the country are giving instances of people who are out of sorts on account of the company's tremendous bi-monthly calls upon their "pocket reserves." One of the most powerful kicks we have noticed is that of President M'Kinley, the head of the widely-known M'Kinley Music Co., of Chicago. He was drawn into the meshes of the half-rater by the example of other good business people, and was led to believe that the bonds that would be issued to him every five years, would greatly reduce, if not entirely dispel his assessments after fifteen years. He has now got there, but got it in the neck, instead. He was in the Massachusetts Benefit for a large amount when it closed up, after he paid its increased assessment for a time or two; and now to have the Mutual Reserve call for $325 bi-monthly ($1,950 a year) caps the climax with him. He elevates his battle-axe and goes for the company in a lively fashion. He says: "If I had been held up by foot-pads, I would consider myself the victim of circumstances, but to be held up by this insurance (?) association in such a bare-faced and apparently legal manner, is an outrage." He wrote the president of the Mutual Reserve Fund, as follows:

You are probably aware that the music company of which I have the honor of being president, is known from one end of the country to the other, and we have agencies in every city and town in the United States We distribute through these agencies millions of catalogues and circulars. It is my intention to give a wide publicity on the back of these circulars and catalogues to my experience in the Mutual Reserve Fund Life. I am satisfied that it will act as a warning to any contemplating insurance in your company.

Mr. M'Kinley has received bushels of letters from all parts of the country commending his course. One of them is from a man who says he joined the Mutual Reserve in 1885, at the age of 39, for $5,000, the assessment to be $6.80 bi-monthly, which, with $15 for annual dues, came to $55.80 per annum. Cheap enough. Pretty soon it jumped to $76.20; then to $86.82; and now to $112.30. He is puzzled, and thinks he had better stop short off. What a fool he was to suppose any concern could cut down Old Mortality's demands to one-half what they had always been. A very little penciling might have shown him that no person aged 39, with 29 years of expectancy, could honestly get $5,000 for $40.80 per annum—omitting the $15 of expense fees. Even if paid for thirty years that would only come to $1,224. Where would the other $3,776 come from? And how would all the holes made by early deaths be filled. Many would die during the first ten years, contributing very little, and more the next ten, and nearly all the remainder the third ten, while a few would linger on and pay heavily for possibly another ten or fifteen, only one or two passing the "age 80" mark out of each 100 who joined at 39 years of age. But no association could live long enough on such a rate to be there when old age was reached.

William McGill, coal dealer, of Bathurst street, Toronto, gives his experience. Put in tabular form it runs as follows:—

Number.	Date.	Amount.	To 1895.	To 1897.	In 1898.
33,098....	Oct. 17, 1885,	$2,000	$39.36	$55.92	$ 87.36
67,417....	Dec. 14, 1887,	3,000	70.38	97 38	131,04
Totals..............		$5,000	$109.74	$153.30	$218.40

From 1895 to 1898 his assessments have about doubled, and he warns the public to keep clear of assessment insurance. He must now pay $218.40 or drop out. Next year, $240.90. At 65, the rising rate shows $330.90; at 70, no less than $480, and at 80 it calls for $1,098.55 for the year.