

## THE TARIFF ISSUE.

The recent speech of the Dominion Premier before the workmen of Toronto was chiefly devoted to the tariff question, from a Free Trade standpoint. Another proof that this will form the main issue between the two political parties at the general election. So recently as 1875, Mr. Mackenzie stated that, on the question of incidental protection, there was no difference between the two parties; his present speech shows how completely they are in antagonism now. The importance of this fact is that any considerable alteration in the tariff is a question that must be decided by the electors. Much of Mr. Mackenzie's argument consisted of an illustration of the working of Protection in the States. It is not correct to assume that Protection in the States dates back only to 1860. The policy of Protection was adopted during the war of 1812, when political necessities obliged the Americans to manufacture for themselves. That they have now carried Protection to an extent which is greatly injurious to themselves, there can be no doubt; though we should hesitate to admit some of Mr. Mackenzie's illustrations of the evil.

One complaint made by Canadian Protectionists he certainly showed to be unfounded. The cabinet makers of Canada are said to be ruined by the pouring of cheap American furniture into the country; the fact being that last year we exported within \$140,384 as much furniture as we imported, a fact which has not been presented by Mr. Mackenzie for the first time, but which very effectually disposes of this complaint. The truth seems to be that, some years ago, cabinet making was exceptionally profitable; the effect of which, as always happens in such cases, was to attract too many into the business. The competition in the business is mainly between Canadians.

The condition of American cotton manufacture is not wholly explained by the injurious effects of an excessive tariff. The English cotton manufacture is in even a worse condition.

We are surprised to read in this speech that Canada imports no more goods than she can pay for. The bankruptcies certainly tell a different story. On the whole, Mr. Mackenzie's speech, though it contains much that will not bear criticism, is calculated to set men a-thinking, and on that account its perusal will be useful, though it will be most profitably read by those capable of supplying the needful criticism.

**FREEHOLD LOAN AND SAVINGS COMPANY.**—The shareholders of this Company held their nineteenth annual meeting in the commodious offices which they purchased last year. A larger proportion of the stockholders were present than is ordinarily the case at such meetings, and the steps proposed by the management received the personal consideration and sanction of an unusual number of the Society's members. A special meeting of the shareholders had been previously held, at which it was unanimously resolved that all shares hereafter subscribed in the Capital Stock of the Company should be fixed and permanent capital, not liable to be withdrawn, but transferrable in the same way as the other shares of the Company. As a sequence to this, a resolution was passed at the general meeting on Tuesday, the Directors authorizing issue of 6,000 shares of new stock, on which 20 per cent. should be paid on subscription. The remaining 80 per cent. to be for the security of British holders of the Company's debentures, who prefer this kind of security. The year's business shows growth in amount of deposits, in the various items of interest, and the net profits, after paying ten per cent. dividend, have admitted of \$20,000 being added to the reserve fund, which now stands at the handsome total of one third the Society's capital.

## TECHNICAL DEFENCES.

We are in receipt of a communication from the Secretary of the Mercantile Fire Insurance Company, in reference to our article of last week, under the above heading. The letter, which is rather long for insertion, states that this is the first contested case the company has had since commencing business two and a half years ago, and then refers in detail to the circumstances under which the insurance was effected, to the misrepresentations made and particularly to the fact that the applicant was only a lessee whose term had almost expired, and who, though the owner of the building insured would, unless he could make terms with his landlord in the meantime, have to remove the building at the end of the term, by which means it would be rendered of very little value. Our correspondent then refers to the suspicious circumstances attending the fire, and claims that the reason for resistance was that the directors were persuaded that an attempt was being made to defraud the company. It is admitted by Mr. Sims that the learned Vice-Chancellor sympathised strongly with the plaintiff and made many remarks "prejudicial to the company."

All this is very much what we expected. The company felt that a fraud was being attempted; and considered themselves justified in resisting payment on all possible grounds, even though some of these were purely technical. We are quite free to admit what the Secretary claims:

that his company is not alone in taking such a position. The practice is common. How much better if companies would prove that which they contend to be the real reason for their resistance, or failing this, pay the claim. They would then merit praise instead of blame and take away from the insurers that public sympathy which it is feared does much to encourage the making of unjust claims against insurance companies.

**FIDELITY GUARANTEE IN NEW YORK.**—We noticed the fact some weeks ago that Mr. Edward Stark, late Manager of the Life and Guarantee departments of the Citizens' Insurance Company of Montreal, had removed to New York. The enterprise which he is promoting there is the formation of a guarantee society for assuring the fidelity of persons in offices of trust. Although we have long had such societies in Canada there is not one in New York, strange to say. Mr. S. Batchelder, jr., of Cambridge, Mass., has for a year past been agitating in Boston the establishment of such organizations, and we hope to hear he has succeeded in founding one. In the notice of the proposed New York company, which we find in the *Tribune* of that city, a mistake is made in naming Mr. Stark as having been sent to Montreal to establish the Canadian business of the European Guarantee Society. It was not Mr. Stark, but Mr. Edward Rawlings who was Canadian manager of that company from its first appearance here, under whom Mr. Stark was an efficient officer. When the European withdrew and the Citizens' was established, Mr. Rawlings took the management of its guarantee business, and upon leaving it, the same gentleman founded the Canada Guarantee Company, the latest and most successful of the kind here; and Mr. Stark succeeded him in the charge of the departments of the Citizens' business which we have named. The New York Company is to have a capital of \$150,000, in shares of \$100 each.

**MARINE SURVEYS IN GREAT BRITAIN.**—Provision has been made by the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act of 1876, for the organization of Courts of Survey and Appeal in Great Britain, to which dissatisfied shipowners might appeal from the decisions of the Board of Trade surveyors. These Courts are to consist of a Judge, who may be the County Judge, Stipendiary or Police Magistrate, sitting with two assessors, who must have nautical or engineering skill. To the list of the latter may be added the name of any one recommended by the government of a British possession. Under the last named provision the name of Samuel Laphorn, Esq., Lloyd's Surveyor, Glasgow, has been added to the list of Assessors representing Canada, and has been approved of. The Quebec press approve of the appointment. Mr. Laphorn having been for years one of Lloyd's surveyors in this country, and being acquainted with the construction of wooden ships.

—The returns of the British Board of Trade for the month of April, 1878, show that the total